

Plaster

A
JOURNAL
OF THE
LIFE AND GOSPEL LABOURS
OF
JOHN CONRAN,

OF MOYALLEN, IN IRELAND, WHO DIED IN THE
YEAR 1827.

Now first published from the original MSS.

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P R E F A C E.

IN offering to the public the present small volume, it may be well to state that it has been selected from the manuscript journal of our dear friend John Conran, late of Moyallen, in the County of Down, Ireland. Care has been taken, in making these extracts, to preserve and connect all the most valuable and instructive matter, leaving out only such passages as did not appear desirable for publication, or whose scope was embraced in other parts of the work. Some verbal alterations have also been made to lessen the many repetitions, and a few additions where a clearer elucidation of the sense of the writer seemed required, which have in most cases been placed within brackets; the sole object of the Compiler having been neither to add to, nor to diminish from, the testimony which this faithful servant and labourer in the Gospel was concerned thus to leave on record, for the magnifying of that Divine Grace which was not bestowed on him in vain, and by which he was what he was. For the above-mentioned omissions the Editor finds a sanc-

tion in the following allusion to his journal, made by John Conran near the close of his life :—" Upon having these memoirs read to me, I observe some matters which may appear, and did so to me, as scarcely proper to be inserted in them—to the wise and prudent, among us and others, they will appear to be foolishness ; but as I sat this day in religious retirement, it was opened on my mind that the new birth is brought forth like the natural one in a state of infancy—in this state we think as a child, and speak as a child, and use and practice childish things ; but when we gain some further strength and acquaintance with the Divine mind, we gradually see things as they really are, and lay aside these childish things, experiencing a growth in spiritual stature till we attain that of a young man or woman in Christ. Some years since also being retired into religious silence, at a time of great discouragement from having heard that Isaac Sharples had destroyed his writings, the following charge was clearly uttered within me, ' Gather up thy fragments, let nothing be lost, for they will be looked for.' Under these considerations, I feel easy to leave these passages to the revision and discretion of solid Friends, to retain or obliterate as they may think them likely to be useful or otherwise.—JOHN CONRAN, *Moyallen, 14th of Fourth Month, 1827.*"

Should any in rising from the perusal of the suc-

ceeding pages admit feelings of discouragement, from observing the deep probations through which our dear friend had frequently to pass during the latter period of his life, it is hoped that they will recollect that he was a chosen instrument in the Divine Hand, and as such needed again and again to be dipped into Jordan for his further purifying for the work whereunto he was called ; and that as he was thus deeply baptized, so he was the more enabled to live very near in spirit to the Source of all good, and was often refreshed by Him who promised to be "as the dew unto Israel," at times in a manner which it would not be suitable, perhaps not possible, to convey to others. So let none be dismayed, or cast away their confidence ; rather let them continually remember that "He is faithful who has promised," and that no more will be required of the feeblest of His fold than He will with the requirement give them strength either to endure or to perform.

It is believed that to those yet remaining, who knew and loved John Conran, these memorials of the Lord's leadings and tender dealings with him will be precious, and will revive in their remembrance the line upon line and precept upon precept which he was made an instrument of conveying to them in the days of their youth, when the visitation of Divine love was extended to them ;

may the recurrence thereof lead to the heart-felt inquiry, how far the Heavenly calls have been answered, and their day's work kept pace with their day ; and if a degree of fear and doubt should clothe their minds on this scrutiny, may there be an earnest applying for Holy help to make straighter steps to their feet the remainder of their little time, that so they may yet be enabled to glorify and praise His name, whose mercy endureth for ever ! And may those of the rising and succeeding generations, in observing the unshaken faith, the simple obedience, the confiding patience, and the deep humility which characterised this faithful servant of his good Lord, be stimulated to follow him as he endeavoured to follow Christ, that so they also may be graciously permitted to lay down their heads with peace and praise !

CONTENTS.

CHARTER I.

	PAGE.
John Conran—His Education—Early Life—Religious Exercises—Convincement of the Truth—And leading into the Testimonies thereof	1

CHAPTER II.

1773. His preparation for the Ministry—Travels as guide to Esther Tuke—Also with Mary Robinson and Barbara Drewry—His first appearances in the ministry—Accompanies Christian Hustler and Phebe Marshall	31
--	----

CHAPTER III.

1782. Attends the Yearly Meeting in London—Joins Robert Valentine and John Hall in visiting Leinster and Munster provinces—His Marriage—Visit to the families of Ballyhagen and Ballinderry Meetings	65
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

1786. Religious services in Ulster Province—And in Carlow Meeting—Death of his Daughter—Visits the Meetings in Munster Province—Illness and Death of his Wife—Returns into Munster	102
--	-----

CHAPTER V.

- Attends sundry Meetings, from 1808 to 1812—Visits the families in Waterford, Clonmel, and Cork—Various Exercises and Services around Home 123

CHAPTER VI.

1815. Continuation of the Journal of his religious experience and services 149

CHAPTER VII.

1819. He becomes a Member of Lurgan Monthly Meeting—Religious Exercises—Accompanies John Kirkham and Visits the Families with him in Dublin—Continuation of his exercises and services 174

CHAPTER VIII.

1824. Various Exercises and Openings in Scripture Doctrine—Conclusion of his Journal—Testimony of the Monthly Meeting of Lisburn concerning him 223

THE
LIFE OF JOHN CONRAN.

CHAPTER I.

JOHN CONRAN—HIS EDUCATION—EARLY LIFE—
RELIGIOUS EXERCISES—CONVINCEMENT OF THE
TRUTH—AND LEADING INTO THE TESTIMONIES
THEREOF.

I HAVE had it on my mind, at sundry times for years past, to leave some memorial of the tender and merciful dealings of a gracious Creator with me, unworthy as I feel of the least of them; and I trust and hope my endeavouring to do so at this time proceeds more from a desire to give the praise to whom it is due, than to exalt the creature, to whom only belongs shame and confusion of face.

I am now, (1808), in the 69th year of my age, and though the concerns of my past life may by many be thought of little consequence to the public, for whom they are not recorded, yet they may prove of advantage to some who may be led to

travel in that path which the vulture's eye has not seen. The keen discerning eye of human wisdom hath not been able, in any age of the world, to disclose that mystery that was hid from the wise and prudent, in all ages and generations; but the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, being way-faring men, of simple manners, and not acquainted with that learning which the heathens took so much pride in, walked in the living experience of the ways and workings of the Divine grace in their own hearts, following and obeying it, and were thereby made partakers of that covenant of life, which cometh only and alone through the spiritual appearance of Jesus Christ within them. Such as these, let their outward name to religion be what it may, whilst they obeyed this heavenly light and were followers of it, became children of it, and the works they did in obedience to it were works of righteousness, and were accepted at their hands. It was after this manner, that many professing heathenism, were not only a law to themselves, but their lives and conversation made them as lights in the world; the full manifestation of the glorious gospel day, being reserved for the coming and appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which day Abraham saw in the vision of life and was glad: in the same life and light the prophets and holy men of old, as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit,

foretold these glad tidings. This revelation, man by his own wisdom, and aided by all the acquired learning either of himself or others, was not able to comprehend ; neither was this learning sufficient for men in former ages, nor is it sufficient in this age or generation, savingly to shew to themselves or to others, who Christ within, the hope of glory, is, or to enable them to confess Him in life and conversation, governed by holy fear, that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God—flesh and blood cannot reveal this now, no more than it could to Peter, but our Father who is heaven. Believing in this Scripture, Matt. xi. 27., that “no man (as man) knoweth the Son, but the Father, nor the Father, but the Son, and those only to whom the Son doth reveal Him”—I make these few observations in the forepart of this narrative, as my mode of living, birth, and parentage, was not corresponding with my profession and faith at this day. And as my change from the outward and visible signs, representing God’s grace to man, to the inward and spiritual grace, typified by these shadows, was not the result of my own wisdom or will, or that of others, but arising from the secret manifestations of His Divine grace in my heart, I feel desirous to bear my testimony to this inward revelation of light and truth, which I fully believe comes from Jesus Christ, to redeem those who feel it and are obedient

to it, from all unrighteousness and the world's lusts, and to teach them to live soberly, righteously, [and godly], in this present world, Titus ii. 11, 12 ; and that it not only teaches us, but also is sufficient to help and deliver us in every needful time of trial, which a belief in the outward ordinances, and the observation of times and ceremonies, never did accomplish for me, as may be seen hereafter in this recital.

I was born in the city of Dublin, in the year 1739, my parents professing with the Church of England, I was bred in that profession, and had the advantage of a pretty liberal education under a clergyman of that way. After I had acquired some acquaintance with the classics, before I was twelve years old, I was placed under the care of Abraham Shackleton, of Ballitore, where I acquired further improvement in my former studies, as well as an acquaintance with such learning as was necessary to qualify me for business. I may not omit a circumstance which attended me there when about thirteen years of age, being an instance of the merciful visitation of Divine grace to us in early youth, appearing as a spirit of judgment, and condemning those things which His blessed Spirit holds a controversy with. In company with some of my school-fellows, I drank some sweet liquor, (Shrub) which overcame me ; after I was in bed some time, I felt close con-

victions take hold of me, which made me sorrowful, — these gradually grew upon me, and were succeeded by great terrors of death, and future judgment, which caused me to cry out for mercy, and that I would never be guilty of the same again. My old master came up to my bed-side, and stood abstracted till this dispensation subsided, perhaps about fifteen minutes. These impressions, though deep at the time, were soon erased, and I thought very little more about it, being taken up with amusements.

I was placed apprentice in Lisburn, in the county of Antrim, to learn the linen-trade ; in that situation I had more liberty than hitherto I had experienced. My intimate acquaintance was with young men about my age, and having a pretty good share of money given to me by my relations, it led me into amusements to which youth are incident. I kept a horse, and was very fond of hunting ; I attended balls and assemblies, to which I was much addicted, and this led to a desire after fine clothes, which I indulged to an expensive degree ; I was also fond of music, and had a strong propensity to singing and whistling, which the love of music leads to. I may say with Solomon, I gave my heart to know pleasure in most shapes, which the sons of men are given to—not as the wise man said, to know what it was good for ; *that* knowledge was reserved by the good Shepherd for a future day,

when I was made to see in that light which is superior to the written word, that these things lead to the chambers of death ; for the lovers of pleasure are not, nor can be, lovers of God, as there is no concord between Christ and Belial. I continued pretty much in these practices and habits till I was about twenty-four years of age, when I felt my mind oftentimes brought into serious reflections, and that disposition gradually wore away which led me into gay company, and at the same time out from hearing the Divine voice, which is a still small voice in the secret of my heart ; and to the surprise of many, some of whom were otherwise valuable members of the community, I left the assemblies which were termed innocent amusements. I had lodgings in town, and kept very much at home ; my former companions used to come and tempt me to go with them, but I refused with such a countenance bespeaking a degree of solidity as surprised them, and I heard it was reported I was taking leave of my senses, which occasioned others to come and look at me to see if it were so. My disposition for singing and whistling, which was a favourite amusement, fell away, I could not tell how, and I think I never resumed it ; and although my education never led me to look inward for that which is only to be found within, yet I was often led into secret recollection and retirement in spirit,

which led me into a belief and perhaps some sensible experience, that what was to be known of God was made manifest within. My secret breathings began to be after God, these led me to the frequent attendance of public worship, and I very rarely missed receiving the bread and wine, except I apprehended myself disqualified. The recommendation not to approach the Lord's table, nor to receive the elements unworthily, lest I should eat and drink my own damnation, had been a block at which I had long stumbled; but one day, on that occasion, I thought I felt restrained from going out as usual with those who did not communicate, so in much fear I approached the table, and received the bread and wine, which gave me great satisfaction that I had now received this rite of my church, and I continued this practice for some years. I believe I was permitted in this seeking state of mind, to try this ceremony what it was good for, for I was an advocate for the religion of my education, and I have been told by a dignitary in it, that he was always glad to see me in church, as my deportment there was devout, and he was sorry to lose me.

I was intimately acquainted with sundry of the people called Quakers, and had an esteem and friendship for them; but their pretensions to such refinements in religion, their claim to inspiration, and their silent meetings with the benefit said to

arise from them, I could not well relish, neither did I at all believe it. I was of the judgment that the New Testament contained all that was necessary for man's salvation, but it used at times to stagger me, how I should put to practice its precepts—in it was the form, but where was the power to fulfil? Oftentimes I did groan for deliverance from the power of sin and death, and like many of my then fellow-communicants, I believed there was no redemption from it on this side of the grave; this settled me down in a degree of ease in the outside performances, which like the law formerly did not make the comers thereunto perfect; yet to me, I believe, they were made useful to bring me unto the better Covenant.

Whilst I was seeking after redemption from sin and transgression, I left the town, and took a farm, where I have now lived about forty-three years: I believe this removal was in the ordering of best Wisdom, it led me away in a great degree from my former acquaintance and habits; my spare time was taken up with useful, and to me they were agreeable, occupations, I farmed, and followed my linen business. I attended the public worship rather more constantly than before, though about three miles distant, and thought nothing could shake my opinions which were orthodox in relation to it; I had not any thoughts of making so important a revolution as to change or alter the religion of my educa-

tion—here I was at ease. But from my frequently retiring into a secret communion in my own heart and being still, I was gradually led to a close reliance and dependence upon Divine instruction, not considering that any other body of Christians made this profession more openly than I did. Divine Mercy saw me at this time, as He saw Nathanael formerly under the fig-tree, when no other saw him, and suffered me to try my own strength, in endeavouring to establish my own righteousness; that by finding it unequal in the contest with the man of sin, I might more readily submit, when the time should more fully come to ask for and receive strength from Him, upon whom our help is laid.

I usually presented my petitions night and morning, that I might be preserved from temptations and from sins, and very frequently read some portions of Scripture before I went to bed. The week before I received the elements I usually read the service appointed thereto, and watched over my words and temper, that I might receive this rite with some degree of acceptance. But it was often cause of surprise to me, that I felt no additional strength to be derived from my pretty constant attendance on public worship, and the sacrament, so called, having read and heard of the beneficial effects obtained from receiving the bread and wine; for on those occasions, (which were to me in good degree

solemn,) when I retired from what was called the Lord's table, and humbly kneeling in the pew I returned thanks to God, and prayed that it might be blessed to my regeneration, my prayers even then seemed to be dry and unproductive of the fruits I was taught to expect from them. All this was performed in my own strength—I said I would be wise, but it was far from me—the hair that was by nature black was not hereby made white, nor that which was crooked made strait, and instead of the old man being more crucified then than before, the enemies of my own house kept possession; yet I may say their goods were not in peace, I longed to get them turned out, and to be set free from the law of sin and death, under which I groaned and strove for the mastery. I had a natural warmth in my disposition, which I was very desirous to overcome as it unsettled my mind from that state of quiet in which I found rest; but all the care I used was not sufficient at times to subdue it, and it was cause of great uneasiness to me when it did get up: yet I was enabled through Divine favour to keep up a fair outside appearance with men, was not guilty of immorality, and was reckoned sober and religious, and upon these grounds I held a pretty good opinion of my own attainments. Here I was ready to settle down, and to think I had reached the desired haven of rest; but this state, I believe, is one of the subtilties of our grand adver-

sary, and is a false rest, and not [that] prepared for the people of God: out of this the enemy will not disturb us, he will allow us to remain there all our lives, as I fear too many do—resting *in* their own labours, their works will not follow them. But my merciful Redeemer, who knew the integrity of my heart, and saw that bread did not satisfy my hungry soul, because I hungered and thirsted after righteousness which these things did not produce, was pleased to visit me again and again by the secret touches of His Holy Spirit, gradually drawing my attention thereunto season after season, making me acquainted therewith as a light in my dark heart, and as a reprover and swift witness against the appearances of evil, to which I gave heed, and rejoiced in it, but must say I knew it not as I have since known it; I believed it was Divine, but my mind being so limited by the prejudices of education in favour of that profession of religion I was taught to believe in, I did not look for, neither did I expect to feel, in myself, the second appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ without sin unto salvation. My views and expectations were outward, my worship was only in the outward court, which was trodden by the Gentile spirit. I sought for Him without, whom my soul secretly desired to find—a Saviour who was promised to save us *from* our sins, and not *in* them. Sin had become so exceedingly sinful to

me, that my cry at times was, “a Redeemer, or I perish ;”—but I found Him not—I was seeking the living amongst the dead—the law formerly did not make the comers thereunto perfect. He, whom I was seeking, was risen, and the day was coming upon me that these empty forms and shadows were to flee away, and the Sun of Righteousness to arise with healing in His wings, in order to bring forth that life in me, which, being hid with Christ in God, all my endeavours in my own strength, will, and wisdom, proved ineffectual. And when the day of the Lord’s power came upon all those things I thought so much of, as my attainments in a religious life and conversation, it burned as an oven, and consumed every thing of that nature, that the Lord alone might rule and reign in my heart, whose right it is. My righteousness appeared to be as filthy rags, and was not sufficient to cover my nakedness ; I could then say with holy Job, “Naked I came into the world, and naked I shall go out,” unless, oh Lord, thou cover me with a new garment, the fig-leaf covering does not hide me from thy judgments,’ which then began to be revealed in my soul.

I had been in the practice of going occasionally to the meetings of Friends for years past, but as my spirit became exercised after more durable riches than I had already obtained, I attended them more frequently, yet cannot say, I felt myself much bene-

fited thereby; for, although I knew the people called Quakers made profession of a more spiritual religion than other people in this land, I was not then capable of forming a just judgment of that which I had only heard of by the hearing of the outward ear; my spiritual eye had not been then anointed, by which only I could see the wonders of the new creation of God, in, and through, His dear Son, Christ Jesus. The time was not yet come that the Lord would enter into His temple, and the earth would be moved at His Divine presence, who indeed is the Lord of the whole earth, and worthy, worthy to be feared, honoured, and obeyed!

Whilst I was in this seeking frame of mind, I attended a Province Meeting held in Lurgan. In the first sitting a Friend spoke upon this portion of Scripture, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me." I did not find this testimony produced any good effect in me, for I was built up in a good opinion of the religious profession of my education, and I did not see much in the lives and conversations of many amongst the Quakers, to induce me to give them much preference to many amongst my fellow-professors: moreover, I did not comprehend the nature or use of silent meetings. There was a Friend there from Pennsylvania, Robert Willis, I

think he was silent in that sitting. Upon Friends gathering into the Meeting for Discipline, I went in, not knowing the impropriety of it; and though there were doorkeepers they let me pass on as they observed a solemnity in my countenance. In the pause of silence Robert Willis spoke, what it was I could not tell, my mind being gathered into inward silence; but such a power broke in upon me that I was greatly broken into tears, and my whole body was shaken in an extraordinary manner, attended by feeling the Divine Life to arise within me; and though it brought a spirit of judgment with it, yet it left a healing virtue, so that I thought then I would not be ashamed to confess to the Truth in the public streets, let the shame be ever so great. The cross then was nothing to me when compared with the treasure which was hidden in my heart; I was then determined to sell all, so that I could gain this pearl I had been searching for so long in vain among the rubbish. Oh! I remember that day, how I did rejoice! a new song was put into my mouth, even praises to my God!

I do not expect any other but that this statement will be called enthusiasm, or the effects of a disturbed or warm imagination, by those who have never been acquainted in themselves with the like happy and blessed experience, which I call, as to myself, the beginnings of the new creation of God in Christ

Jesus. The Gospel, in the days of the first messengers, was termed by the worldly-wise and prudent, foolishness—an eminent publisher of it was told too much learning had made him mad; their lives, indeed, were counted as madness, because the life they then lived was in Christ Jesus, whilst the lives of those who condemned them were after the flesh, fulfilling the lusts thereof. At the same time I fear there are many who make a profession with me of those things, who are not able to comprehend them, for we have not any thing that is good but what is given to us of God; and if we are not concerned to ask wisdom from Him, we shall not receive it, for the promise remains to be to those who ask: some amongst us do ask, but they ask amiss, asking that from the form which it cannot give. To these states I shall not use any reasoning to strive to convince them of their error, having the experience in myself, how hard, nay, I may say, how impossible it would have been to have convinced me of these truths before, till Divine Mercy was extended to me, and by a simple operation comparable to the clay and spittle to open my blind eyes, so as measurably to enable me to see the light of His glorious countenance, and to confess Him before men. But I write these things for the way-faring man and woman who may be travelling Zionward, and can read me in their own experience, to encourage them to hold on their

way, and to let no discouragements they may meet with in their wilderness travel, cause them to look back to Egypt, for it is only those who hold out to the end that will be saved.

I was now very much reduced to silence, and my spirit oft-times inward, waiting and looking after Him whom my soul loved. I thought, having found Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write—whose blessed day Abraham saw in the vision of life, and was glad, and whose blood of sprinkling speaketh better things than that of Abel—that now the Egyptian bondage of sin was at an end; which perhaps was the case with Israel formerly, when Moses brought the message to them from the God of their fathers, commanding Pharaoh to let Israel go and worship their God. But spiritual Pharaoh was not to be so easily prevailed against as I thought. When he found I was for moving from under his government, and making for the promised land, submitting myself day after day to the guidance of the cloud by day, and the bright flame by night, I was closely pursued by him, his horsemen and chariots, as if they were determined I should not escape from them. The power that was permitted to them to try me with was great, so much so that I thought there was no power so great, not having as yet experienced the coming of Him who was stronger than they, clothed with the power of

His Father, to spoil [the strong man] of his goods, turn them out and take possession for Himself. This is the work of regeneration, so little known by the worldly-minded professors—this is the gospel of glad tidings, (the power of God,) preaching and teaching liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison doors to them who had been bound by the chains of darkness and of sin. This is not the work of a day, or of a year—perhaps it may be that of the greatest part of our lives, to be going on towards perfection, as the apostle Paul declared, “Not that we are already perfect;” though he had been a preacher of the great and acceptable year of the Lord in Arabia and the coasts and the nations round about; the command of our Lord and Master must be remembered in every stage of our journey, to “watch and pray.”

Oh! the terrors that surrounded me by day and by night, lest the enemy should overpower me, and bring me back to the house of bondage, having been already made a partaker of a degree of the glorious liberty of the sons of God. One temptation after another was presented to me, some in the wisdom and guile of the serpent, blasphemies in the roaring of the lion were spiritually uttered in my hearing; but I found by experience my peace and safety was in deep retirement of spirit and silence; and though the subtle adversary came only to kill and to destroy,

yet his waters turned God's mill, driving me home, and to seek for help where help was laid, and in due time I *found* to be there. Deep indeed were my conflicts, so that I was willing to exchange conditions with the labouring poor, if I might find peace with God and remission of past sins.

In Eleventh Month, 1772, I attended the Half-year's Meeting in Dublin: at this time I had not made any alteration in my dress or appearance, it was pretty much in the usual way of other people. In one of the meetings for worship I felt my mind drawn into deep silence—every outward consideration seemed to be withdrawn, and a deep solemnity was the covering of my spirit, which I very much gave up to, having found my strength at times renewed by it. In this season R. Willis stood up, and what he delivered I believe I did not then know, nor have I since, but I felt my lost state and condition so set before me in the secret of my soul, that with the anguish of it I cried for mercy; for I thought the pit was open and ready to receive me, and all the horrors of it surrounded me. This visitation of judgment, with the terrors attending on it, brought me very deep and low in my mind, and I found the [Divine] fear to operate as a fountain of life, preserving me more from the snares of sin and death than the many years of will-worship I had been in the practice of. I could now say,

from an awful experience, that my Redeemer lived, was a God near at hand and not afar off, and that He was of purer eyes than to behold sin of any kind with any degree of approbation. I returned home much humbled, was often in retired silence, and diligently searched the scriptures to find some relief to my troubled mind; and I can bear my testimony to them, that they are the scriptures of the Spirit of Truth, given forth of old time by holy men of old as they were inspired of the Holy Ghost; the same Divine Spirit bearing witness to them in my spirit, and opening to me counsel and instruction, to my edification and comfort.

It was now that the Lord's judgments were revealed in my earth, that I might thereby learn righteousness, all my sins and my transgressions, which were many, were set in order before me; it appeared that a book of remembrance had been kept on high, and that nothing was forgotten. Oh! the terrors of those days, when the righteous Judge of quick and dead sat in judgment in my soul, arrayed in terrible majesty and power, not only to search out the most hidden things, as if nothing was to escape His all-seeing eye, but I was made livingly sensible He had the power to cast into hell. Day after day uttered speech, and night after night declared knowledge, that there was no repentance in the grave, the repentance and remission must be

done in these bodies ; for hours I have been on my knees with uplifted hands, asking for mercy, and sometimes apparently brought to the brink of everlasting death before I could feel remission of sin. My duty to my parents was brought into inquisition, and I had to make a close inquiry, in great fear, as they were both dead, and no recompense in my power ; but I had the peaceful answer to make on the scrutiny, that I had not ever wilfully disobliged or behaved undutifully to them. Oh ! ye children, let me entreat it of you, in the fear of the Lord, “obey your parents in the Lord, for this is well-pleasing” in his holy sight ; and you who act in a light manner by your parents, and trouble them by your disobedient conduct, I am persuaded of it, you will have to answer for it in this world, or in that which is to come.

Now, to speak on a subject that such numbers, whom I prefer to myself in acquired knowledge and natural understanding, place so great dependence upon, is hard for me ; yet I cannot easily avoid relating my experience of that formal profession I made, when all my deeds of righteousness (so called) and unrighteousness were brought before the great tribunal that was now set up in my heart. I saw that when the true church fled into the wilderness, and the great red dragon cast out his floods of persecution after her, there was a place prepared for

her there for a time, times [and half a time;] that then the wisdom of men got into dominion, and sat as antichrist in the temple of man's heart, where Christ before had sat and ruled as the Head of His church. Then they apostatized from the true faith, which was his Divine gift to His church, and having lost the light in the darkness of the human understanding, they set up a form of godliness, denying the power that can only produce it; and instead of the true and living faith which was once delivered to the saints, they established creeds and forms of prayer, like the kerchiefs we read of that fitted every stature, that suited every state and condition; thereby turning the people from feeling their own states and conditions as they were in the sight of God, (who, perhaps, was at the same time judging them secretly) to trust to prayers and supplications made ready for them some hundred years before they were born; when the Divine Spirit, who willeth not the death of him that dieth, was ready to make intercession for them, not in a set form of words aptly joined together, but in sighs and groans which no other could utter for them.

And as to prayers in a set form being presented at the Throne of Grace by unregenerate man, who is, in a state of moral turpitude—I am persuaded they are an abomination to God, and will not meet his acceptance. First make the tree good, and the

fruit will be good also ; but it is Christ alone, the good Husbandman, that can make the tree good, and then He will eat of the fruit. I was in the practice, night and morning, of saying prayers in the form, in as humble a manner as I knew how. This was borne with in the days of my ignorance ; but when in the light, I saw how will-worship was not acceptable in His holy sight, and had forsaken it, this practice remained ; and one night, as I was on my knees, I felt such a terror take hold of me, that I quickly rose, and never dare afterwards proceed in the same formal manner of praying. When the true church came out of the wilderness, which she has done in these latter days, she came out *leaning on the breast of her Beloved*—laying aside all useless forms and ceremonies that do not profit the comers thereunto, and solely depending upon the immediate teachings of the Grace of God and the revelations of His Holy Spirit ; thereby antichrist was dispossessed of his rule and government in the church, and Christ took to Himself his own power and authority to rule and govern, who appoints His own servants, qualifying them for the several uses and purposes which He in His holy wisdom has allotted, sending them forth, and telling them, “Freely ye have received, freely give ;” these seek no man’s silver or gold, or apparel, but serve their own necessities, and those of others, by the labour of their hands.

Although I had suffered deeply, as I thought, in the hour of judgment and of burning, yet those things which I had suffered were only as a beginning of sorrows; the ground of the heart was not to be lightly turned up, the gospel plough was to be introduced, and the fallow ground broken up, and I was to sow no more among thorns: the terrors of God's judgments were often set before my mind, and made such deep impressions as I believe will never be erased. It is a truth past all contradiction with me, that the Divine Spirit will not dwell in a temple which He has not previously cleansed in a great degree. I speak now to you, my beloved brethren and sisters, who have in your own experience known your measure of the depths of Satan, and have been brought out of Egypt with a high hand and outstretched arm, and have known Christ's baptism to be with fire and the Holy Ghost, and that it is the baptism which only and alone affords the answer of a good conscience towards God, and cleanses both flesh and spirit.

To relate much more of the inscrutable judgments of God, which are past finding out but in the experience of them, may not be needful for me to do at present. I may say that "day after day uttered speech, and night after night declared knowledge"—quietness succeeded these fearful voices uttered from the mount, not through or by man, in it he

had no share or portion; remission of the past seemed to [be spoken] in this quiet frame, and a voice to say, "go and do so no more." I was now brought into the school of Christ, in order to be instructed by Him in the law that was to be the government, through Him, of my future life; the old wine was poured out, the old heavens were rolled up as a scroll, I willingly surrendered them to the fire. I conferred no longer with flesh and blood, but gave up to the heavenly vision, and bowed down my ear to instruction, for He spoke now as never man spake; instead of whetting His glittering sword, and laying hold of judgment, He became my shepherd, and drew me to follow Him in the new way by the Shepherd's crook of His love, sometimes leading me into green pastures, refreshing my poor disconsolate mind. Then it was I thought I would joyfully run the way of His commandments and never be weary: here I would gladly have tabernacled, but I was to go down from the mount, and pass through the winter season, and mourn the absence of Him whom my soul was now taught to love, for the savour of His ointment was delightful unto me.

The same Divine principle [of light and life] which led me out of the forms and ceremonies to worship the Father in spirit and in truth, also led me by its secret teachings into a straight and narrow

way, as to all superfluities in dress and address; and knowing in whom I had believed, the same hath preserved me in it to this day, and I trust will do so to the end, as there is no variableness with Him. Simplicity of dress and address is becoming a humble follower of a crucified Saviour, whose garment or vesture was so unlike the fashions of that day, that they cast lots for it as a curiosity, for it was without seam. There is a cross to many among us in these things, as the practice of them declares to the beholders whose disciples we profess to be; and although all power in heaven and earth is given unto Him, yet, because the world in their foolish vain hearts despise the wisdom of God in these things, intended to crucify us to the spirit of the world, and the pomps and vanities of it, they are ashamed of the cross, and would rather enjoy the pleasures of a sinful world, which are only for a season, than to suffer affliction with the people of God in the scoffings of the world. Although I knew that [the Quakers] held these testimonies, and that they were outward marks of union with them, nevertheless I was desirous to know the ground of them in myself, and not to take up any thing in which such great salvation was concerned, but from a clear conviction that it was from the living foundation God had laid in my heart, and not man.

The practice and use of the plain language is consonant with the rules of grammar and the language of holy men of old, as the Scriptures bear testimony ; yet I was desirous to prove all things, to bring them to the standard of truth in my heart, and if they stood the measure of that, to cleave to them. I began to use this language sometimes, and at other times not, when in my infancy : my near kinsfolk, I heard, said I was beside myself, therefore it was a cross to use it in their presence ; but denying the cross brought sorrow and weakness along with it, and a fear, that if I went down the steps of Jacob's ladder I should find it more difficult to recover the ground I had lost than even to ascend to another step. The prospect of the glorious crown of righteousness that was set before me as attainable through faithfulness, encouraged me to press forward ; as I endeavoured to do so I grew stronger, the yoke became easier, the burden light ; and when through inadvertence an omission occurred, (for afterwards I never dared wilfully to transgress,) I always felt wounded in my spirit.

The change in my dress was a great cross, as I was always given to fashionable dresses, and at this time had sundry suits of apparel of this sort. I felt a solemn covering to come over my spirit early one morning, whilst in bed, which drew me into deep silence and attention, when I felt it required

of me to conform to the simple appearance of Christ's followers ; His garment was all of a piece, so ought mine to be, of a piece with my speech, my life and conversation. This felt to me a severe stroke ; no shelter was now left for me, but I must appear as a fool to the world, my speech and then my garments would betray me that I had been with Christ, and professed myself to be one of His disciples. I wept bitterly, and pleaded the cross it would be to me before my friends and acquaintance, with the loss it would be to me in my present clothes ; but all was silence to my complaints, and the heaven worked in the lump till the whole man was leavened into submission, and then I ran the way of His commandments with joy and alacrity of heart, so much so that I have heard in passing some people say they would give their oath I was a Quaker. Oh ! saith my spirit, that all the family were so conspicuous, even in the outside, that they might be known thereby whose they are !

Another testimony we hold is, that we cannot with a good conscience, contribute in any wise to support the ministry of any church whatever, who derive their maintenance from their service at the altar ; because we believe Christ is in this day the head of the true church militant, that His promise made to it before He ascended to His Father, " Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world," has

been fulfilled, and is in this very day fulfilling, His Divine presence being felt where two, three, or more of His living children are met and assembled in His name. This being a truth that we fully believe, we are feelingly made sensible that He, the head of this body, qualifies and sends forth servants and handmaids, as of old, to minister, preparing them for His work and service, by various dispensations, baptisms and spiritual washings, and hands to them the bread which He has broken and blessed, and they have to hand it to the multitude, without any addition of their own. And these knowing in whom they have believed, will neither pay nor receive wages of any man, as the price of their labour; they are persuaded that He whom they serve is faithful and true, and having received their ministry without fee or reward, they freely give it, looking to Him who sent them for their recompense, which is the sheaf of peace in their bosom. I was willing to bear my testimony on account of tithes, the cross was freely submitted to: I had formerly made agreement for my tithes at forty shillings per annum, during the incumbency, the bargain was not done away, and my hay being in cock, and a large quantity within the power of a large river, made me very uneasy, so that I wished the proctor would take his demand; there it lay, I believe, two or three weeks, and I did not feel at liberty to draw it till

the bargain with the proctor was vacated. He readily gave me my liberty, telling me he expected nothing else from me, and he took that season, I think, twelve or thirteen meadow cocks for his forty shillings, which might be worth upwards of ten pounds.

Upon reading this account, some unbelieving person may query, how did I know but the subtle adversary had put on the appearance of an angel of light, and had deceived me? I answer such an one in the words of our blessed Lord, which are the words of truth; He says, "My sheep know my voice, and follow me, and the voice of a stranger they will not follow;" moreover we are desired to follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another: now I never found anything but peace as the consequence of unswerving obedience in these particulars.

I have now given a brief recital of the cause I had to unite in religious fellowship with those with whom I have since continued to walk, subject to many scoffings and mockings from some of my kindred, as well as from many others, and was mercifully enabled not to turn my cheek from the smiter, but to bear them for His sake, who suffered more and worse, from sinful and perverse men. I rejoice and give thanks to my merciful Redeemer, that He has in mercy called me from the receipt of custom, and

has given me a portion in His service, and fellowship with His people ; and I write these things hoping they may be blessed to some wayfaring traveller in the same road, that they may become as way-marks to them, and show thereby that it is not an unbeaten path, but others have travelled it before them, and found safety.

CHAPTER II.

1773. HIS PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTRY—
TRAVELS AS GUIDE TO ESTHER TUKE—ALSO
WITH MARY ROBINSON AND BARBARA DREWRY
—HIS FIRST APPEARANCES IN THE MINISTRY
—ACCOMPANIES CHRISTIAN HUSTLER AND PHEBE
MARSHALL.

IN some of those seasons of deep baptism before related, it used to spread upon my mind that the Lord had a service for me, to make use of me in His church and family, which brought a great fear over my mind lest Satan, (whose power in deceiving I was now measurably acquainted with) should put on the appearance of an angel of light [and deceive me], and so I should become a vessel marred upon the wheel. The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue in this arduous concern, must be of the Lord alone; man must give up his wisdom, and his acquired knowledge must be submitted to Divine direction, and only such parts retained as Divine wisdom may see meet to make use of, although it may make us appear as fools to those who before thought other-

wise of us. Yet this state is afforded us in mercy, to humble us, that we may depend upon nothing of our own, or of former knowledge of doctrines, unless we feel them renewed in the life and Spirit; that thereby all our fresh springs in and to service, may be in Him our Head and holy high-priest. What humiliations are requisite to bring us to that standard which God is pleased to teach of His ways! And how unwilling are too many to come up to this standard to be measured by it! But when His righteous judgments are in the earth, it is then, and then only, we are willing to learn righteousness. In this important engagement it may be said, He leadeth Israel as a flock, and bringeth them oftentimes into green pastures, and causeth them therein to lie down as at noon. This indeed is a great mystery which the worldly-minded professor knoweth not, neither can, because it is only spiritually discerned, and by them for whom it is prepared. This was the case with the disciples formerly, when it was said, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of God's kingdom, but to the world in parables." The true ministers go forth without scrip or purse, without depending on anything but the call to present service; they do not think former experiences, nor yet the concurrence of their brethren and sisters, (the laying on of the hands of the elders,) a sufficient qualification to officiate in the church; but

have to wait for the fresh anointing if it may be afforded, if not they are silent, and wait on their Lord and Master girded, till He is served. And so godly jealous are these baptized servants of the honour of their Lord, that they neither look for nor receive wages or hire from any other hand but His; they are willing to spend their own, and be spent in health and constitution, in His service, knowing that when He comes His reward of peace is with Him.

After being near two years in this school of religious experience, in which I thought I had made some proficiency, and feeling a degree of justification to succeed the dispensation of condemnation, which also had its glory, I thought the time was near at hand that I should be called upon to invite others to come and try for themselves how good the Lord is to those that love and fear Him. In meetings I used at times to feel the Word of Life dwelling in my heart, and a flow of language living there, as if addressed to sundry states present, but dared not venture to utter it in words, and I do not recollect I felt any discouragement for not doing it. In managing my outward business, in the garden and fields by myself, I sometimes have felt a living language in my heart as if I were addressing an assembly of people, and it used to begin so imperceptibly to me, that it would be

moving some minutes before I would turn my attention to it, and when I did, it increased so much as to bubble up like a spring and break me into tears, and left a sweet savour of peace and comfort behind. These were I believe only the first-fruits of the Spirit, and the ministration of preparation for the important work of the ministry, and which I fear some have mistaken for the work itself, and so have been born before the time, and have not been of that use and service to the church they were otherwise designed for. The prophet Elijah (I believe) was tried with somewhat of a similar dispensation in the Mount, but was mercifully saved from going forth, till he heard the "still small voice" distinctly inquiring of him what he did there. With some the fire is too hot, and they flinch from the hour of His judgments before the vessel is fully burned; these cannot contain the new wine, become leaky, and suffer it to run out and be spilt, to the injury of the family, and their own great hurt. Such should return again to the Potter's house, be put upon the wheel and become as the passive clay, willing to be formed and fashioned into such vessels as the great Potter may see meet and fitting for His own use. These prospects to me of service died away, though I received much encouragement from some Friends with whom I travelled in their service for Truth, as well as by letters from others,

but they never caused me to exercise a gift I had not as yet received ; I was exceedingly jealous over myself, that I should not be a vessel marred on the wheel, therefore covering my head with my mantle, I waited for the still small voice, I believe full three years after, but in the meantime was not left comfortless. The work of regeneration was going forward, and living experiences often fell to my lot in travelling, which was very frequent in this nation, but I think I never once declared them publicly. I kept carefully to meetings, save sickness preventing me, it was a duty impressed on my mind at an early period, and I think I can say I never suffered the cares of the world to stand in the way of it ; and though I gave up many opportunities in which others amassed large property, yet when at liberty to make use of my time, I was diligent in my business, procured a sufficiency for my family, and was enabled to entertain strangers who came to my house.

But when the time was approaching that I should publicly tell to others what the Lord had done for my soul, it was preceded by a long and dreary wilderness travel, no dew nor rain, so that I was made willing in this encampment to submit to anything, if the cloud might be removed from the tabernacle, and the bright flame once more appear as the signal to move on. Wonderful indeed are all the Lord's

ways, and past our finding out by even former experiences, only by standing still to see the salvation of God. In this depressed frame of mind I went to a neighbouring meeting where there were to be two women Friends from England. In the afternoon meeting, I felt the burden of the Word as a fire, and after resisting it a great part of the meeting, I stood up with these words which our blessed Lord used when he wept over Jerusalem, "Oh! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets," &c., and sat down in such peace as I think I never felt before, which continued the rest of the evening, under a solemn covering. I accompanied the said Friends in their journey northward, and did not speak again in public for some weeks, till we came to Ballymurry, where my mouth was again opened in a short testimony, and in so great weakness that I often thought there was scarcely ever a child born in so weak a condition; I was so long in finding my feet to be able to go alone, that for years after when I had a concern to go abroad, I attached myself to some traveller, for I thought myself pretty secure under their wing. In this weak state I was mercifully dealt with, for what was given me to say would be repeated in my heart very many times before I could stand up to deliver it, and the Friends with whom I travelled were made easy with my company, so as to admit me

willingly. I can say I had a merciful and good Master to serve, who condescended oftentimes to the low estate of His servant, and bore with my many infirmities.

I was received a member of Lisburn Monthly Meeting in the year 1773, from that to the year 1775, my mind was under deep exercise, and various probations, learning the law written on my heart.

[In the year 1774, he accompanied Esther Tuke, of York, then on religious service in Ireland, to some meetings, to good satisfaction, who soon after her return home, thus writes to him.

FROM ESTHER TUKE TO JOHN CONRAN.

ESTEEMED FRIEND,

It will, perhaps, not be unacceptable to be informed of my safe return to my own habitation, little more than a week ago, rest seems pleasant after the constant fatigue of travelling, and close exercise to both body and mind; but though travelling is attended with many difficulties to me, yet in remembrance of the help that was afforded, and the many preservations I witnessed in this long journey, I can say hard things were made easy, and bitter cups sweetened, and many favours bestowed beyond my deserts by a bountiful Giver, who is worthy to be obeyed in the smallest and greatest of His requirings.

I have often remembered thee since we parted, with strong desires that stability and faithfulness may be the girdle of thy loins, pure wisdom thy guide in the path I trust thy feet have been turned into, which leads through the wilderness and Jordan to a settlement in the land of promise, which I doubt not thou hast at times had a sight of. Various, according to our different dispositions, are the dispensations, Infinite Wisdom sees necessary for us to pass through in this journey from Egypt to Canaan, but all for this great end, to reduce self, and thoroughly purify from all uncleanness, both of flesh and spirit, subdue the evil, make all things new and all things of Him; great is the work, and many have known it right begun, have entered into the way, and run well for a time, but one thing or another has hindered. Some have been like the young man who came to inquire what further good thing he should do, and turned away sorrowful at the information, "Sell all"—here is indeed the trial, all that treasure we have got, be it our own wisdom, righteousness, or whatever else, it must be parted with, and the innocent, sweet, simple, child-like state experienced which desires the sincere milk of the word, that their growth may be thereby. May thy growth be this way, from a child's state, to man's, &c., then will the great end of the Lord in so signally calling thee be answered, to His glory and thine

own everlasting peace ; for then will thou be formed for Himself, and will show forth His praise. But beware of notions, dear friend, and feeding on the tree of knowledge, it remains to be forbidden fruit which a cunning subtle adversary presents ; the Lord's servants are the poor in spirit, the meek, whose joy is increased in Him, who have no might of their own, have nothing, and can do nothing, but as fresh strength from Him is administered.

Thy sincere friend,

ESTHER TUKE.

Two women friends, Mary Robinson and Barbara Drewry, came here in the course of their religious service, and feeling my mind drawn to accompany them to several meetings in this province [Ulster,] I did so ; and went with them to Dublin, and from thence through the two provinces of Leinster and Munster, of which journey the following are some extracts :—

1775—*Sixth Month 12th.*—I went to meeting at Hillsborough, with my dear friends, B. D. and M. R., and unexpectedly during the ministry of B. D., apprehended myself called upon to proceed with them, which I did to Stramore, Moyallen, Lurgan, &c. [After speaking of a fear possessing his mind lest by engaging in this journey he should be running in his own strength, and incurring the cen-

sure of some of his friends, he relates that on the road these cloudy feelings seemed to be dispelled, and peace restored to his mind, and says] I hope I am thankful that I was preserved, willing to give up to the Master's requirings, though I left my business and family unprepared for such a journey, but I was preserved pretty much in resignation.

20th.—Whilst in Newry I met with some people of business, with whom I had some conversation, which I thought left me weaker; upon leaving the town I felt a [temptation] in myself almost to deny my profession, and was quite ashamed of the company, plainness, and simplicity of myself and friends, which I told them of; and a lesson may be read in this to myself and others, how they or I hold too close a conversation with the world, or the things thereof, which weaken the hands of the sons of Zion. We went forward in our journey, and were at times favoured with a sweet and open conversation, and permitted that freedom in it as to relate many things that I believe were advantageous to each other. I thought I found my dear friend, B. Drewry, often had a polishing effect upon me, and her remarks on and corrections of my weakness and faults, were wonderfully refreshing and comforting, which made me not repine at my journey, which was a truly satisfactory one to me.

In our way from Ross to Clonmell, we were accom-

panied by divers Friends, some of whom seemed, I thought like the bullock unused to the yoke ; their behaviour, though innocent, indicated such confusion and want of regularity, that it gave me much pain and disquiet, and though I used some care to keep still at times, yet the contagion was catching. On this and other occasions I have found myself very much weakened by being in mixed companies, especially those who have felt or known little of discipline in themselves ; for I am ready to conceive, as it regards myself, that the conversation of such fastens upon me, and by giving way to it, by degrees, and that almost insensibly, I become in measure leavened into a like spirit, which is a cause of pain and disquiet to my mind—to feel disorder instead of stillness, which I esteem one of the safest habitations to dwell in. I hope this observation may be of use to me, and the effect produced a merciful warning to abstain from mixed companies, and from those whose minds have never been regulated, and brought into some degree of order, as my strength in measure consists (when in company) in remembering in whose presence I am, and carefully to watch my lips, that my conversation may be known to be permitted to me, and to attend to the pointings in my mind for that permission. When this is carefully attended to, I am often in silence which I think gives strength, and when conversation is brought on in this line, it

is edifying, and leaves a savour on the mind that is refreshing. On the contrary, I have experienced that a free conversation promoted by answering every question asked in such mixed companies, leads the mind insensibly beyond the proper watch, into such a variety of subjects, the canvassing of which the regulated mind has not any business with; after such a conversation, I have felt myself reduced to weakness, confusion, and disorder, and at times have been almost ready to faint in spirit.

Eighth Month 3rd.—Meeting at Ballinakill. The same sort of dryness and barrenness, was experienced here as in other places, which makes me ready almost to conclude the fault to be in myself, and that I am denied that sense of feeling, which I formerly had, for some reason which Wisdom can unravel, not being conscious of any falling away on my side; but the great Master knows best, therefore may His will be done. This meeting was held in silence, and pretty many strangers were at it and behaved themselves well.

6th.—Monthly Meeting at Mountrath. How shall I be able to express the feelings of the visitation I had last night! I believe none can conceive it, but those who have experienced the like. To be admitted to a freedom, if I dare say so, of communing with the Great Master, the Beloved of my soul, of asking favours and questions; and the glow

of love and favour that surrounded me for about an hour, I think I cannot express suitably. Surely I never can do enough for so good and kind a Master, and hope I shall never be tired of running His errands, and that He will be pleased to give me strength to give up all for His great name's sake. [He describes the meeting as having been one of close and deep exercise, but that through favour the cloud which seemed to envelope it, was gradually dispelled, light broke forth, and the testimony of Truth, rose above the dark spirits of some of the people, and after relating a part of B. D.'s weighty communication therein, goes on to say] — the Friend observed in her testimony, that a heavy or dark cloud hung over this nation, and that a sifting day would be afforded to the people, when the foundations of many would be tried, and that none would stand but those which were laid on the Rock immovable, the everlasting Rock, which was Christ. That whether they would be tried by the sword, by the famine, or the pestilence, she knew not, but that many would in the day of trial, find their covers too little for them, and that the chaff would be separated from the wheat. These prophetic warnings I have heard more than once, and have felt them sealed in my mind, and if I may compare the state of the Lord's visited ones, to the present state of the church and society in this nation, we often find

trying dispensations are afforded to the visited to cause them to draw nearer to Him, whom they have always experienced to be a ready help in the day of trouble. And if the church and people are tried with outward persecution, it may be a means of making them draw near to Him who is willing to draw near to them, since they will neither hear the reproofs of instruction inwardly nor instrumentally. I think Truth was triumphant over darkness [in the meeting], which was a comfortable experience to my hungry and thirsty soul, which had in many meetings been baptized in the cloud, into death and darkness.

Eighth Month 8th.—Arrived this morning in Dublin, where I left my dear companions, and returned home. In this journey, I had not anything to say in any meeting, for worship or discipline, yet I believe it was a profitable time to me, of improvement, having my spiritual faculties exercised, and a further degree of strength and experience afforded to bear the assaults and buffetings of my unwearied enemy. Some thought I had better learn this at home; but we are differing in our spiritual constitutions, as in our natural, and the treatment for one does not answer for all. I was drawn forth to this journey I apprehended by the great Physician, on the approach of the great linen-market in Dublin, the profits of which I resigned,

and left my goods at home to the disappointment of my customers who wanted them; and if I lost that advantage, I had the rich reward of peace in my bosom.

At the half-year's meeting, the summer of this year, I fell into company with a young woman, Louisa Strangman; the first time I saw her at a Friend's house, I felt, in silence, a strong draft of love more than natural, and a secret intimation impressed my mind that she would be my wife; this I hid in my heart, and it was nearly two years before I felt at liberty to disclose it to any one, waiting as I apprehended the Lord's time to communicate it: in this interval there was a Friend closely addressing her, but my first impressions kept me easy under it. And when I felt the way open to proceed in it at that time, it was nearly six years after this before we were married; this was a season in the Lord's hand of deep exercise and great trial of my faith and patience, as the prospect I had at first was often totally obliterated, and when these would be almost gone, it would again revive with a degree of clearness, to my great consolation. I held out to the end, and was crowned with a wife who proved the richest earthly blessing I was ever favoured with, a true yoke-fellow, in spiritual as well as temporal concerns, and who never threw any impediment in the way of my going on public services. I write

these few hints, that in this important and weighty engagement, we should have our eye turned to the Light, [of Christ's Spirit] if we expect that favour from the Lord, a good wife, who is indeed a crown to her husband !

In the many discouragements inwardly from Satan, to discourage me from embracing the new and living way, which had now been opened in measure to my view, was the prospect of great sufferings, perhaps death itself, and in these days of darkness, and the shadow of death, human nature recoiled, and I was at times brought very low, [ready to say] " How shall I stand if these things befall me ? I fear I shall surely give way, and lose all ! " But Divine mercy was extended to me, by shewing me that what appears impossible to man, is possible with God. As I sat in the back part of Lisburn meeting, which was held in silence, I felt the love of God extended to me in so powerful a manner, as to dedicate my soul and body to His service, and under the living impressions of it to say, " Do with me, O Lord, what thou wilt, I am willing to suffer death for thy name sake ; " for death had then no terrors in it for me, the fear of death was swallowed up in victory. It was then I could account for the noble stand the martyrs made, who, in opposition to the torments which cruel and unreasonable men had subjected them to, held fast their integrity ; and I felt

from my experience of the foregoing, that the Lord by His enlivening and consolating presence was with them, as He was with the three children in the burning fiery furnace, and crowned them with a crown of everlasting righteousness, eternal in the heavens; and not only them, but all those who love, honour, and obey the Lord, their righteousness.

I staid about home I think in the year 1776, but was diligent in attending meetings at home, and the national half year's meeting. In 1778 and 1779, I was not much from home on Truth's account; I attended some meetings with Samuel Spavold, Isaac Gray, and Thomas Carrington, to my satisfaction. There was a national visit appointed by the Yearly Meeting in London, to the Monthly Meetings in Ireland, which was pretty fully performed by John Storer, John Townsend, Thomas Corbyn, Joseph Rowe, and James Backhouse, to pretty good satisfaction.

THOMAS GREER TO JOHN CONRAN.

Stockton, *Fourth Month 17th*, 1780.

DEAR JOHN,

As I have passed along from place to place in this country, I have more than once remembered thy request that I would write to thee, and having a little leisure this evening, I sit down for that purpose. I got safe to Scotland on Third-day evening; next

morning I set forward for England, took a meeting at Sackside, on the First-day following, and in the course of that week got through the meetings in Northumberland, and attended their Quarterly Meeting. In those parts I found a living remnant in our Society, as well as great openness amongst many of those not in membership with us, many of whom flocked to meetings, whose appearance at first rather filled me with fear, but like a much greater instrument formerly, I was soon given to see my mistake, and that the Lord had a seed amongst them, to whom the Gospel must be preached in its own unmixed purity. My heart was indeed humbled from meeting to meeting, under renewed sensations of the wonderful workings of the God of all grace, who is able through weak, very weak, instruments, to carry on His great and glorious work ; may a due sense of His manifold mercies to my soul, ever be the covering of my spirit !

On the 8th inst., I got to Newcastle, where is a pretty large body of Friends, and where our worthy friend Mabel Wigham, and three other public Friends live ; but notwithstanding there are divers valuable Friends in that place, I did not fare as well there as among the poor mountains in Northumberland ; yet was favoured with an open door amongst them, both in the fore and afternoon meetings ; but experience has taught me, that even in those places,

where the people are favoured with a living ministry, by their calling for, and relying upon help from the servants, they fall away from the life of religion in themselves, by forsaking the free Fountain of living waters, and hewing to themselves cisterns very liable to be broken, and at best can contain no living water, but what they immediately receive and scatter at the word of command ; the utmost intention of which is, to direct the enquiring mind to the Fountain of light, life and wisdom in themselves, that great mystery hid from ages, but now mercifully revealed, Christ *in* His people the hope of their glory.

From Newcastle I proceeded to North Shields, their Monthly Meeting being there next day, thence by Sunderland, Shotton, Durham, Auckland, and Staindrop meetings, I got to Darlington, and staid over their two meetings yesterday ; as I mentioned before I have abundant cause to be thankful that Best Help has not forsaken, but from meeting to meeting, and also at many other seasons, has been felt near, to the comfort and strengthening of my mind to pursue the line of duty which opened in prospect before I left home. Having now got through this county, I purpose going into Yorkshire to-morrow, and taking about eighteen meetings in that county, which lie nearest the sea-coast, and then set my face towards London, if enabled to.

do so. I may inform thee, I have been poorly in health ever since I got into England, occasioned by the exceeding cold weather, and high east wind with snow ; but through mercy, I have hitherto been enabled to get along, without any loss of time, or pain in riding, save when the cough comes on, and I trust I shall be enabled to get through the rest of the journey in the same manner ; having renewed cause to believe I am under the care of Him who numbers the hairs of the head, and without whose notice a sparrow cannot fall to the ground. And notwithstanding He in His wisdom tries the faith of His depending children, in order to enlarge their experience, and thereby further qualifies them for the labour and service of the day, yet will not forsake those whose dependence is singly fixed on Him, and have no confidence in anything but the all-sufficient help of that Arm which brings salvation.

With dear love to thyself, and any inquiring friends to whom thou thinks it will be acceptable, I remain thy loving friend,

THOMAS GREER.

In the year 1780, I joined Christiana Hustler and Phebe Marshall in the course of their religious service, and continued with them throughout from Lurgan till they took shipping the following Second Month at Dublin; I passed through many exercising

baptisms, occasioned by weakness and fears in the exercise of a small gift I had received in the ministry, in which their company was serviceable to me. I left home Sixth Month 2nd, to join the Friends at Stramore, under a full persuasion that it was my duty to do so: let none think I had not necessary avocations to call me to another line, for our great [linen] fair in Dublin was within a few days of commencing, and though I was assisted by having orders for some of my goods, yet I had a considerable share left on hand to sell, and that the most unsaleable part I suppose; the appearance of these things was troublesome to me, but I was mercifully helped through this difficulty. I wish Friends may deal gently with those who may feel these puttings forth, especially where their conduct in most respects is orderly; for the exercise the enemy is permitted to raise against these things is very trying, and if they have also to feel unskilful dealing, it may crush the broken reed, and lay it aside for a long season under great discouragements, as unfit for service. I trust I have a degree of thankfulness, and desire a greater share of it, to my merciful, kind and good Benefactor, who I believe not only required this offering at my hands, which costs me something, but also put it into the hearts of His people to make way for me; for my dear and beloved brethren of our province seemed willing to trust me out that

I might not be lagging behind, and a tendering time it was to my spirit in [mentally] bidding them farewell on my quitting Castle Shane ; though they were not present, yet I had a tendering and affecting feeling of them, in that one Spirit which I believe unites all those at times who drink of it. Oh ! my beloved friends, I most tenderly saluted you, and longed for the prosperity of our Zion, and you in particular ; I was concerned for you that none of you might receive hurt or damage, and in the springings of that ancient fountain, that cannot be drawn dry, I thought I could have saluted you in an endearing epistle of gospel love : thus did my spirit drink of the cup of brotherly love whilst I travelled along, which was a comfort and consolation to me, and I could say many things to entice others to come and try for themselves, how good and kind the Lord is to those who love and fear Him.

The family visit not being quite finished in the bounds of Moyallen meeting when I arrived, I had to join the Friends concerned therein in the remainder, as I had also to do in the greatest part of Lurgan meeting ; I had a few words handed to me, at times, in some of the sittings, as I apprehended, to drop amongst us, which I did in fear, and kept as near to the opening as I thought I could, and was at times favoured with the wages of obedience.

30th.—At Ballymurry: after I had sat a short time in the meeting, I felt a burden on my mind, which increased to be so weighty as to be difficult to sit under; I remained in degree still, when I felt some matter to appear before me, which grew more clear and distinct, and seemed to press for utterance. I reasoned with it till it passed away, when growing afraid, remembering the long forbearance of a merciful Creator, I entreated if it were a requiring that came from Him, that He would be pleased to renew the same matter afresh on my mind, and that I would take that as a confirmation. It was pretty immediately renewed as fresh as I could desire, but the fear got up, and I had almost reasoned it away again; when I stood up, and before I spoke, I felt like a little fire to kindle in my breast, and uttered these words, "The Lord has lifted up an ensign to the people, and a standard for the nations, the standard of truth and righteousness—keep faithful to your testimonies, Friends, and measure yourselves by this standard, and let each individual of you come up to his measure:" my mind has been favoured with rest and comfort since.

Second Month 2nd.—Meeting at Moate. I went to this meeting which was large, in a good degree of fear, having been known there formerly, making a different appearance to my present. After my dear friend Phebe Marshall had sat down the second

time, I stood up, and in great fear declared, "Oh! that the people were wise, that they would consider this, and remember their latter end. Friends, take not up your rest in your earthly possessions, for it is a false rest—a polluted rest; but turn unto the Lord, for in the trying day He will be as a staff of support to those who lean upon Him." After I sat down, my beloved friend Christiana Hustler stood up, and declared that these words which had been repeated in their hearing, had been the companion of her mind for a considerable time. "Oh! that the people were," &c., and recommended the advice given. Then dear P. M. stood up and declared something of a like nature, which gave me much consolation to find the unity of my beloved friends. The covering of my spirit was comfortable, heightened by the fear I was in of taking away with me what I had dropped, which had tended to my own peace, and was fresh cause of renewed gratitude.

3rd.—Meeting at Birr, which to me was a very hard painful one. My dear friends had frequently pressed me to sit beside them in these small meetings, which I was not easy to give up to, and almost always avoided it, being afraid of offending some one by so doing, which made it a cross to me. In this meeting I was brought under an exercise on this account that was distressing to me, and under

the weight of it I made covenant, that, if I were forgiven, I would use my best endeavours to come up in that requiring, though I felt it a very bitter cross, and thought it hard it should be required of me. I here found I was too neglectful of the advice of my friends, in these or like small occasions, and that I was preferring my own judgment, or stiffness, or fear of man, to their feelings.

6th.—Meeting at Mountrath. [After alluding to a trying conversation that he had with a Friend before going to meeting, relative to his travelling, and which brought him into a very painful situation, he says] This journey so far has been of considerable service to me, as I apprehend I have acquired a greater knowledge of men than I possessed before, which has already had a good effect on me, so as measurably to remove that fear of man which I believe too much possessed my mind, so as to hinder my journeying forward, to my own hurt. The meeting I can hardly describe, from my own feelings having been so broken down before it, but I believe I can say there was a Hand of favour stretched out towards me in it, having to sit the greatest part of it in a still quiet habitation, feeling my wounds to be bound up, and wine and oil to be in a small measure poured in, so as to confess Him to be the tenderest of parents and best of masters. Yet I believe my dear friends and fellow labourers

had to sit where the people sat, which I dare venture to say was not in heavenly places in Christ Jesus! Oh! the threshing instruments! they were used to thresh the dry and barren mountains of a long and empty profession; yet I believe they did not come down, but rather that they thought they were too hardly treated, their maladies were not as bad as they were represented, therefore it was to be feared the cure would not be so readily perfected. (The meeting held near five hours) and the Friends had I believe to pass through near three hours of painful silence, the spring lay so low, and nothing to draw with; the rubbish so great, and few faithful labourers to lay their shoulders to the burden! Oh! ye faithless generation, what will ye do in the end? will your being the children of faithful Abraham work out your salvation? It is sorrowful, painfully sorrowful, to behold these things, and I wish I may be mistaken in judging a spirit that I believe would be ready to cast stones at the servants if they could.

Seventh Month 9th.—Meeting at Limerick. I was much afraid for some time before I reached this city, as thinking it to be a large meeting and fearful of having any thing laid on me in it. After some time of waiting, I thought a little matter arose, which from the weak state I felt myself in, I believed I could not give up to, therefore carried it away

with me, which brought me under a considerable weight and burden. My dear companions had not much service in the forenoon meeting. The same requiring attended my mind in the evening meeting, and became so extremely weighty, that after a painful state of waiting, I gave up to it in a broken stammering manner, which was more clearly and better explained by one of the friends taking it up, to my great consolation.

12th.—Meeting at Clonmel. I am afraid a spirit of earthly-mindedness too much prevails in too many here, which fetters the mind, and prevents it seeking after better enjoyments: a state of resistance of the clay in the hands of the great Potter was treated with, and the danger of standing out compared to rebellion, which is as the sin of witchcraft.

16th.—Waterford meeting. After we had settled down into silence at ——'s in the evening, a little matter came before me in a very lively manner, which I reasoned with till it left me, and I never could see it any more in the light though I earnestly entreated for it, and in room thereof I was filled with doubtings and fears, and suffered a good deal of distress of mind. But after A. B. had opened his mouth my convictions reached me, that I had been unfaithful in not giving forth that which had been handed to me, the holding back of which, I believe, stopped the

spring in others, and was the cause of my punishment, which brought me into a sincere repentance, and I hope will be a warning to me to be more careful for the future. There is great danger in being too hasty in offering, [as well as] too slack-handed, which leads me into fear of erring on either hand ; but I hope for preservation as I remain in the child-like simplicity, either to move or stand still, as I find faith to believe it is required of me.

Ninth Month 27th.—Meeting at Athy, pretty select with the Friends of that meeting. When we were here before, near the close of the meeting, I found it pretty strong on my mind for some time to request Friends to stop, as there were some of other societies present, but was backward and did not, and I thought this was the cause of our return here. I could have wished at some places Friends would not invite their neighbours, unless particularly desired ; I was pained at times on that account to see them so indifferent, giving away to others that bread they had occasion for themselves, as the course of the testimony, I thought, frequently turned from the household to those who were without.

FROM ESTHER TUKE TO JOHN CONRAN.

“ York, *Twelfth Month 21st*, 1780.

DEAR FRIEND,

Thy great and unexpected kindness in giving

me so satisfactory an account of thyself and my beloved friends Christiana Hustler and Phebe Marshall, demands my grateful acknowledgment. I received it a few days ago, when I was about acknowledging some of my transgressions, or omissions, to my honoured friend, Richard Shackleton, and also inquiring concerning our dear friends, who have been long the almost constant companions of my mind. Though writing is now more than ever an irksome task, and what I do very little in, except to my own family connexions, and where duty absolutely requires it; yet, feeling my heart afresh warmed in the renewal of that love, which, though ancient, is ever new, I thought I would not let slip this opportunity of saluting thee therein, and wishing thee well on thy way. I doubt not but thy conflicts have been many, as thou well describes, in a waste howling wilderness, in which I trust the carcase is fallen which cannot inherit the promised land, new desires and pursuits given, and the kingdom received as a little child; in that state of simplicity and innocence mayst thou grow up to more advanced age, be more and more useful in thy day, and brightened and strengthened with use, is my sincere desire.

Though I feel as if my travelling days were near over, yet I may say, of a truth, if ever such a thing should be required as to see your land again,

I should be glad to be sheltered under thy roof, where I well remember I sensibly felt the Son of Peace to be. I hope divers of you will come and make some returns for labours, which, from year to year, our friends have to bestow—that going from house to house is trying work indeed, but the wages will be adequate, which I trust thou and thy companions have, and will experience, and that they will be returned to us again, when the Master hath said “It is enough.” If this reach thy hand whilst you are labouring together, salute them affectionately in my name, it seems all the mite I can cast in, feeling too much covered with the stuff to be fit to converse with those engaged in war. I hope to meet your and our worthy friends, Mary Ridgeway and Jane Watson, at our Quarterly Meeting at Leeds next week; perhaps, I may get my coat brushed, or get on a better, and be more fit to converse with my friends. M. Ridgeway’s service is very great, her ministry deep and searching; they are renewedly united to the living remnant of the Lord’s people, who are thankful He still continues thus to visit. Our worthy friend M. R. seems to have brightened through her recent afflictions, as if she had fully experienced passing through the fining-pot for the silver, and furnace for the gold, and had come out pure. We had almost lost hope of seeing that great good man, Samuel Neale, and his armour-

bearer, but it revives a little through thy hint concerning them. I love thy companions so well as to desire every help and comfort for them consistent with the Master's will. My dear companion and sister in the new relationship, C. H., and I, have been in some degree like bone of one bone, from our youth up, and I have often been more gratified in her enlargement in spiritual gifts than my own, and our love and near unity, I believe, will never here have an end.

I have not time for enlargement, such as I have, and the best I have, I give thee, which I could wish better, but as thou art now at school, and day unto day utters speech, and nights teach knowledge, and not only taught by the Master, but constantly under the eye and nurture of His servants, (thy acknowledged mothers), though I am apt enough to teach, I hope to know my place better than to intermeddle, for if I had the true oil and poured it forth, it might justly be queried, "Why was this waste made?" I was glad of thy hint concerning James Christy, though I am far from thinking I merit the name of mother to so honourable a son; my sentiments concur with thy pertinent remark, which felt to revive strength, to give them a little hint or two of what had long laid upon my mind. I know not what can excuse my great enlargement, after a pretended conclusion (contrary to the advices), but

that the worldly spirit [alluding to an order she gave J. C. for Irish linens, &c.] which is often first, if not last, with many, and had need be thought of by me, never came into my mind till I was about to finish ; however, if thou hast no better, and art still so well disposed as to wish a subject to write to me upon, I have furnished thee with one, perhaps to my own profit as well as pleasure, as I shall be glad to hear from thee at any time and on any occasion, being with the salutation of love, in which my husband and Henry unite,

Thy affectionate and obliged friend,

ESTHER TUKE.

1781.—*Second Month 1st.* We arrived at Dublin, before and since which I have been under a considerable weight of exercise of spirit, having had a view of visiting the families of this meeting, which at times brought me very low, and I got very much discouraged in looking how it might be with me when I got home, lest I might meet with discouragement from one and another Friend ; and I was led through the appearances that were presented to my view, to doubt the foundation and almost the whole of my proceedings in the ministry, which cast a great damp upon my spirit, so far that I thought I would scarcely again venture to move in that service, or if I did, that my way might be so blocked

up as to shut me up in silence. I went to bed [one night] much under these discouraging reflections, but in the morning I thought a language livingly opened in my mind of this import, "To do that, day by day, that appeared to me to do, and not to be looking too far forward to things that may or may not happen;" this dispersed these gloomy clouds, and my spirit was engaged in the thankful acknowledgment to the Lord for this His merciful relief from the discourager. I write these few things that I may remember the Lord's gracious dealings, and that I may be mindful not to be considering what men may say of me or concerning me, but be watchful and mindful after the work and business of the present hour and day. I thought, as I lay under this comfortable feeling, that I felt myself in a good degree set free from this city, and hope I shall continue so, and the little view I had of getting home soon seemed to open before me with considerable satisfaction. I took a last farewell on the 8th of Second Month of my very dear and much respected friends and companions, in whose company I had had many close baptisms, also many comfortable seasons in which we were favoured to drink together of the same cup of blessing; it was a time of painful trial to my feelings, through which I was mercifully supported, and could say on my

return home, that I neither regretted the time nor the expense of this journey, which was considerable. I was favoured to reach home safe, and to find all things generally well, after being absent about eight months in the whole.

CHAPTER III.

1782. ATTENDS THE YEARLY MEETING IN LONDON
—JOINS ROBERT VALENTINE AND JOHN HALL
IN VISITING LEINSTER AND MUNSTER PROVINCES
—HIS MARRIAGE—VISIT TO THE FAMILIES OF
BALLYHAGEN AND BALLINDERRY MEETINGS.

IN the year 1782, as I sat in the Half-year's Meeting for business at Dublin, I felt a warm impression on my mind to attend the ensuing Yearly Meeting in London, and taking the advice of two ministering Friends of our province they encouraged me to give up to it, which I did, and was well satisfied with going. I thought the settling of the Book of Extracts brought an exercise over the weighty part of the meeting, which was borne down for some time, by some light and frothy speakers; but in the end Truth was in dominion, and the meeting ended well, and I may say, I returned with a sheaf of peace in my bosom.

Soon after I came home I visited most of the meetings in Leinster, with Thomas Dobson and John Foster; and in Tenth Month I accompanied Robert Valentine from Pennsylvania, and John

Hall from Cumberland, in their visits to parts of Leinster and Munster provinces, having obtained a certificate for that purpose. I joined them at the Province Meeting at Mountrath, Tenth Month 12th and 13th, where that doctrine was declared, that the parents had eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth were set on edge. The fore part of the meeting next day was cloudy, but there was a door of utterance afforded, and I hope a door of entrance to some of the children. In a select opportunity with the particular meeting, I had to remind them of the state of Israel when Balaam was hired to curse them—they were dwelling in their tents—no divination could prevail against them; but that now Israel fled before their enemies, because some had coveted a wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment, and that they were found in the tent.

16th.—Meeting at Athy: here I experienced a deep baptizing season in poverty and silence, in which I received great instruction in reverence of spirit. Godliness is indeed a very great mystery, which is to be known only by that revealing power in the heart. My dear friend, R. Valentine was well concerned here.

17th.—Meeting at Ballitore: I felt that way which the apostle called a more excellent way opened in my mind, and had to recommend it to Friends as that which recommends all our works to

Divine acceptance; I was followed by R. V. in a lively testimony with similar remarks—it was a time of some favour. Since I left my habitation my way in religious meetings has been, I have thought, much in the cloud; nevertheless, through unmerited regard, I have been favoured to be pretty closely baptized into the states of the meetings, and sometimes enabled through deep wading and poverty to express a little of my concern, in that manner which is as foolishness with weak unenlightened man, yet to a faithful remnant is found to be in the wisdom of God, and by the power of God subjecting to Himself that in us which would desire to reign. May I be reverently thankful for this favour also, of seeing myself in this true light, that without His holy horn of power I could do nothing to His praise or my peace. I am also favoured with the evidence of peace in these mortifying labours.

20th.—Meeting at Kilconner: a low time, yet through Divine favour ability was given to set the testimony of Truth over wrong things. After dinner at a Friend's house we had a pretty open opportunity, in which I was concerned to shew the subtle workings of our great enemy, in the mystery of iniquity, leading the children of men captives at his will, when they are not found walking in that light in which only he can be discovered; in some appearing as the king of the locusts ascending from the

bottomless pit, and in the smoke thereof clouding the understanding, so as to put light for darkness and darkness for light; raising up the reasoning part in others so as to doubt of, and reason upon every thing Divine and human, which workings no eye can see or experience, but that which has been anointed with the eye-salve of God's kingdom.

22nd.—Meeting at Ross: the forepart was low, but through Divine favour a little light sprang up, and I had to express, that the children who are born from above, of the incorruptible seed of light and life, in this day may be compared to the cottage in the vineyard, and to the besieged city—that there are still to be found one here and another there, who are measurably engaged to stand for [the Lord's] cause, and appear as lights in a dark and ignorant world—and that I had to believe the candle was lighted here and placed on the candlestick, to shew light to the house and to those among whom their lots were cast, and exhorted that it should not be hid under a bed of ease, or a bushel, but to let their lights so shine before men, that their lives and good works might bring glory to their Father in heaven.

[From hence he wrote the following letter to his friend Louisa Strangman, who also received soon after a valuable communication from S. Grubb.]

FROM JOHN CONRAN TO LOUISA STRANGMAN.

Ross, *Eleventh Month 25th*, 1782.

Hoping a few lines would not prove displeasing to my dear Lucy, to hear of our safe arrival here, that near and endeared love which I feel towards thee, leads me thus to communicate a little with thee.

We came here last night in company with our dear friend Anne Elly, &c., in whose company at Kilknock, the evening before, we were favoured together with a measure of the owning of Divine regard, opening in suitable and tender counsel to the states (I believe) of the youth present, testifying to them how precious the visitation of Heaven was to some, who, being favoured to find that pearl of great price, sold all that they had formerly a life in, and thereby purchased it,—recommending them to buy the Truth also, and sell it not, and that wisdom, instruction, and understanding that flows from the living Word of God in their own hearts,—giving up to the fire that which is for the fire, and to the sword that which is for the sword, &c. It was well, I believe, that we were there; the Father of His family I hope was felt amongst us, to the help of some present, who might be ready to faint, after fasting for so long a season, sitting in our solemn assemblies, oftentimes as in the valley of Achor and shadow of death. But as we are concerned to be

faithful unto this death, He will arise in His own time for our assistance, and when He comes His reward is surely with Him, and His appearing is at times like the lightning from the east, unexpectedly coming into His temple, where all things should be ready, clean and garnished, and we found waiting, as faithful servants, not knowing the hour in which their Lord cometh.

My mind has seemed to me at seasons, for some time past, to be under a degree of preparation for this journey into Munster,—a state of circumspection and faithful watchfulness, to the holy Head of our most holy profession seems to be laid before me, and to endeavour after faithfulness to His manifestations, that I may receive a foretaste of that crown of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, the fulness of which is to be experienced eternally in the heavens. I think I feel a state in myself, under this preparation, of endeared love towards the Friends of this province, which I believe flows from the Fountain of love, tendering and breaking my spirit, to my comfort and consolation.

Farewell my much loved friend, and I humbly hope to be thy partner and sharer in that holy life which never is to have an end, and to be preserved in that station, through Divine favour, in all the trials of this life. My dear love to thy mother, &c.

JOHN CONRAN.

FROM SARAH GRUBB TO LOUISA STRANGMAN.

Anner Mills, *First Month 18th, 1783.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Thy acceptable letter of the 4th instant reached me in due course. As I felt some of thy painful sensations, [alluding to her prospect of marriage] so I could likewise rejoice with thee in the prevalence of that secret but all-powerful voice, which in seasons of our greatest besetment, when we prove that all our temporal as well as spiritual enjoyments depend upon the Sanctifier thereof, interposes for our help, and commands the waves that they be still. Every little experience of this sort ought to strengthen our faith, and add to our patience in times of trial, knowing that at this word the winds and seas obey; better is it for us that it is not extended in our time, nor governed by our will, for that would leave us destitute of means whereby our spiritual faculties could be exercised and prepared for spiritual services, for ourselves or in the church militant on earth; and did we find it permitted in the Divine law that our wills and inclinations might preside over our religious impressions, how short would their reign be, and how little certainty should we find in their fluctuations. Better, far better is it for us to go under the weight of the cross, feeling its substantial operations on our minds by cru-

cifying us to our own carnal wisdom, and that unto us ; that so an immoveable kingdom may be established in righteousness in us, and, from an increasing pure, holy attachment to that Arm which brings deliverance, we may seek to have our lives supported and conducted by the precious gift of faith, finding it to be our meat and our drink to do the will of our heavenly Father. The comfortable aspiration of thy mind the night before thou wrote me seems a seal to the belief that thy prospect is a right one.

Such are greatly wanted as will firmly stand in the life and authority of Truth, and lift up the standard thereof to the indifferent unwashed professors in this day, who have the form of godliness, but want the efficacy and wholesome fruits of the power. I am convinced, however, that they who stand and are enough engaged faithfully to keep their ranks, must suffer persecution and be lightly esteemed of many for the Truth's sake,—not a persecution like that which befel our predecessors in the rising of the purity of the gospel day, when their bodies were imprisoned and despised, and the Spirit of their holy Head triumphed over death, hell, and the grave ; but this day of trial, if I have any sense of it, is a still more evil day and bitter, because the seed of the kingdom is under oppression, and few are grieved for its affliction. Many are dwelling at

ease in their ceiled houses, are consoling themselves with what they find there, thinking how much safer it is to keep in this habitation than to venture themselves into the battle of a despised cause in these perilous times—others who have been appointed and armed for the Lamb's war have flinched when they were called to stand in the front, for fear of some personal disadvantage,—and there are those who have lost favour and strength, by too boldly and precipitately engaging in battle before their armour was prepared, their earthen pitchers broken, and by the sound of the trumpet they were commissioned to cry,—“the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.”

From a transient survey of the various openings to error, and perceiving that there is but one way and one means to stand in that kingdom which is not of this world, many discouragements arise, and sometimes a language that “one day I shall fall by the hand of the enemy.” And yet I may acknowledge, that in some seasons of trial which I have experienced of late, exceeding and different to what I ever before knew, I have been secretly strengthened by the belief, that as we suffer ourselves to be brought to the balance of the sanctuary, and stand open to every manifestation we may find there, even when it requires us to be melted down again in order to add to our weight, that though the enemy may beset and boldly vaunt against us, pouring as it

were his floods out of his mouth, he will never be able to pluck us out of the Divine hand, but a hook will be put in his jaws, and deliverance wrought for the pure seed. As it is only by our being led down into the deeps, purified there, established there, and there seeing the wonderful mystery of godliness, that we shall be able to stand the fiery darts of the wicked, and after having done all to stand with garments unpolluted, hands washed in innocency, and hearts that have access to the altar of God,—let us not be afraid, beloved friend, but trust and humbly confide in Him who can teach our hands to war and our fingers to fight, and will, as we are faithful to Him, shield us under every assault, from within or from without.

It is very unexpected to me that I have written thus; I had no view of it when I took up my pen, nor has my mind been disposed of late to communicate, but I write what occurs, without restraint, feeling that love in which there is freedom.—I feel nearly and dearly to love thee, and remain therein with R. G.'s and sister Sally (John's) love, thy poor but affectionate,

S. GRUBB.

In this visit to the county of Wexford, I believe I was, according to my small measure, baptized into the states of the people, and made to sit where they

sat; from these feelings I may say, that the life of religion is low in this quarter, many of the aged and middle-aged having buried their talents in the earth, and the Divine Seed seems to be pressed as a cart is pressed under sheaves, to their own great loss. Yet I apprehended that there was a tender visitation of Divine love towards the beloved youth, some of whom were looking to the elders to ask bread, and found few, very few, to break it unto them; the Great Shepherd of Israel will, I believe, in His own time arise for the help of these, and bring them forward into use and service if they prove faithful in the day of small things. Though my way herein was in much strippedness, in which I had to go deeper than heretofore, yet my experience was increased, and I was made willing to be where the seed was, in a state of suffering in many places.

29th.—At Ballicane we had a very heavy, dull meeting: it felt to me that many were buried in the earth, they knew not how to dig, and to beg they were ashamed; they bore the appearance of the Lord's people, but their hearts seemed to be far from Him. I had to minister here in great poverty and weakness, and was favoured with peace.

Eleventh Month 6th.—The National Meeting at Dublin concluded. The several sittings of this meeting were much clouded, too many not sufficiently

concerned to wrestle for the blessing, waiting in a careless, lukewarm and unconcerned situation, like the multitude formerly for the loaves and fishes to be handed to the servants and so to them, instead of labouring for themselves to be fed immediately by the Heavenly Hand. There were many servants present who appeared exercised for restoring ancient beauty in the church; in the meeting for business, R. Valentine was well and zealously engaged on that subject. I thought the business was conducted in too formal a way, barely reading and answering the queries, with little observation on the represented state of the body. I think I never saw into the state of the Society so clearly as of late, and that unless our holy Head is pleased to arise and qualify some suitable well-concerned members in the church, the blessed cause of Truth will suffer amongst us; so many are closely occupied in building up their own houses, whilst the Lord's house is I fear in many places left desolate.

10th.—Very hard labour at Edenderry meeting, a deep covering of the earth rendering the precious seed too much unfruitful among many of the professors. In an opportunity after dinner, the state of the elders in the breaking forth of this Gospel-day was set forth, (some of whose descendants were present,) how they were concerned above all things to do their heavenly Father's will, and that they

were made bright, and noble, and valiant for His cause on earth, by keeping deep in their dwelling, and near the heavenly Spring; they were men to be wondered at by the people amongst whom they dwelt, and from the fulness of their experience had at times to bless that great Name who liveth for ever, and to cry Holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, the heaven and earth was full of His glory—that the same way was open to us, if we, as they, were concerned to have our dwellings where no divination nor enchantment can prevail.

12th.—The select Monthly Meeting was held this morning: in this opportunity my exercise was so close and trying that I secretly cried, “Lord, remember David and all his troubles;” my mind wandered up and down, and could not find a resting place, which was a great grief to me. R. Valentine, after a considerable time in silence, described the state of those who were so exercised in spirit that they could not do any thing for their Master, and so forsaken that they could not think one good thought—that this was a profitable season, purging and purifying the vessel in the laver of regeneration, so as to fit and prepare it for the Master’s use, shewing us to ourselves, and what we are without Him. The queries were answered, and R. Valentine was concerned that Friends should be upright in their answers, and tell the state of things as they

really are. I felt a little matter on my mind, what the prophet saw—the Lord standing upon a wall made by a plumb-line, with a plumb-line in His hand—which opened before me as the wall of discipline which surrounded us, and would preserve us from the corruptions in the world and ourselves—that this discipline was founded in the wisdom of Truth—that those who stood on the wall should build with the plumb-line of truth and righteousness in their hands, and that the order of Truth and the Gospel led us to confess ourselves one to another honestly and uprightly, which might open in concerned minds a word of counsel and advice for our help and recovery.

13th.—Monthly Meeting at Edenderry, a hard and laborious time—a dark and heavy cloud seemed to surround us; Robert Valentine and John Hall appeared with difficulty, there seemed little entrance, or life raised, in the meeting; I thought to carry away my burden, but fearing to withhold, stood up in fear and great weakness, with the remembrance of Israel formerly, when the Divine presence so filled the temple, that there was scarce room for the priests to minister; that under this present Gospel dispensation, a like state was experienced, when the priests and people were so Divinely refreshed in their silent meetings for worship that there was an unwillingness to enter in

and minister, but they sat each of them refreshed and satisfied, as under their own vine and fig-tree, where none could make them afraid, [and I queried how Friends had] felt that day? [for that I could testify] for myself that I had been baptized in the cloud, into death and darkness, and that sin was the partition-wall which separated, &c. The men's meeting was favoured: R. Valentine dropped several weighty suitable remarks; he is a zealous Friend in discipline. I have renewed cause for thankfulness, that I feel the Lord to be my strength in weakness, riches in poverty, and my all in every time of need. I have had trying seasons to pass through [of late], more so I think than I ever experienced since my mouth was first opened in a public testimony for the Truth, having often to go down into Jordan and to stand there with somewhat of the weight of the Ark on my shoulder, and wait for the passing over of the people. It was a comfort and rejoicing to me, to find myself dipped into the same states that my companions were, and to have sometimes like expressions living in my heart; this helped, through Divine favour, to strengthen and confirm me in that which I hope and believe is the way of well-doing.

29th.—Week-day meeting at Waterford: I have experienced a trying state of poverty mostly since I came here, and in this meeting, which I believe I was the cause of bringing on, by refusing to

appear in a state of weakness the day before in a Friend's family ; yet gracious regard was extended to me this evening, in a little opening in this family, after which I thought I had to see that "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet but it tendeth to poverty."

Twelfth Month 8th.—Meetings at Limerick ; my companions were concerned in testimony in both meetings, it was my lot to sit in poverty and silence, life did not feel to me to be in dominion. I fear this world and its pursuits stand as a partition-wall between many and their soul's happiness ; oh ! the desolations it brings upon those who set out well, and run well for a season, but Demas-like, forsake the God that made them, for the glory and vanity of this present world ! Yet there are some here I trust, who have in this the day of their youth chosen the Lord for their portion, and I believe He is at work by His power in their hearts, to draw them near to Himself, that they may become a people to His praise and glory. With these my spirit was nearly united, and in the fresh feelings of that love which flowed in my heart towards them, I was renewedly engaged to supplicate the Father of mercies secretly on their account, that He would in His tender mercy and gracious regard preserve them in His holy life and fear, that

through Him they might bring forth fruits to His praise and glory.

15th.—[After speaking of several meetings, and opportunities at Cork, he says] In all of these my covering was poverty, strippedness, and silence; under this dispensation I grew uneasy and restless, which I believe increased it, till Gracious Condescension was pleased to shew me that a quiet habitation was the safest and best dwelling, and here I was enabled at this time to seek for and find rest to my wearied spirit.

17th.—As we passed along in this city, I have felt my mind drawn in dear love to Friends here, and have been enabled in some families, through Divine favour and ability, to express some things to my own peace, and I trust and hope to the edification one of another; this is renewed cause of thankfulness, when I remember what I had been, and my present state of weakness, how unworthy I am to be made of any, or the least, use in my Lord's family. Let His own works praise Him, but unto me belongs shame and confusion of face, and His mercies, they endure to His unworthy creature to this day. Amen—so be it!

24th.—Cork week-day meeting. My stay here was about twelve days, in much weakness and in much fear; a crumb from the heavenly table was at times mercifully afforded, which helped to sustain

me when I appeared ready to perish. I think they proved profitable seasons, teaching me to suffer hunger and thirst, and therewith to be content, and bringing me to know in my own experience, nakedness, and who it was that should clothe me; so that I then could render praises and thanksgivings to Him to whom they are due.

We left our dear friend R. V. here, to recruit under the hospitable roof of our kind friends Samuel Neale and wife, and set out for Youghal, Clonmel, Mountmellick, and the Province Meeting at Castle Dermot on the 4th of First Month, 1783. In the meeting on First-day we sat near two hours in a painful silence, when I was favoured with a little strength to express my sense of the meeting, which I compared to a spring shut up, a fountain sealed—that there seemed to be little of the flowing of that river to be felt amongst us, the streams whereof make glad the whole heritage of God—that the light of the body is the eye, if it be single the whole body is full of light; but if it be evil, the whole body is full of darkness—that it is for want of our eye being single enough unto Him, who is the Light and Life of men, that we are thus allowed to sit as in the region and shadow of death, having our eye like the eye of the fool, out after the perishing things of this world, and wandering in the darkness of it: and therefore we come

to our religious meetings in this dark state, sit in it, and bring it over our assemblies, and go away, like the door upon its hinges, moving backwards and forwards, and never coming nearer. Afterwards dear Mary Ridgway stood up, and expressed a like sense of the meeting: it was a time of brokenness and contrition to my spirit. This meeting I thought, was a time of instruction even to the unlearned, who might see and feel that the ministers of themselves could do nothing; nevertheless, through Divine regard being extended, we were latterly favoured together, to the comfort and refreshment I hope of many truly baptized ones present.

7th.—Week-day meeting in Dublin.—I have now concluded this visit, and though my way has been much in the deeps, often baptized for the dead, dry, and formal professors amongst us, the lukewarm and indifferent, the earthly-minded, who bring death and darkness to our assemblies,—and have had to sit as the people sit, and to go down and visit the precious seed of the kingdom, which is in bondage in the hearts of the people—though these were very trying, proving seasons, yet they were made profitable, purifying times, having, I believe, to wade and go deeper than heretofore to reach to that life which is hid with Christ in God. My painful travail in spirit was not in vain, for the wrestling seed was at times made to prevail, and the living spring

to arise, to the comfort and refreshment of the truly hungry and baptized spirits; this is an encouragement to persevere and wrestle till the day dawns and the shadows flee away. There seems to be too general a declension among those who should be of the fore-rank of the people, who, with the riches of this world and the anxious love of it, have let in a spirit of ease and indifferency as to those things which alone make for true peace. Yet I believe there are up and down a few substantial living members who love the Truth, are concerned for the promotion of it in the earth, and I hope are under a godly concern on their own accounts to keep their habitations in it, and their garments unspotted from the world. May these be increased, and experience a growth from one degree of strength unto another, that Zion may once more put on her beautiful garments, become as the garden enclosed, and the desire and beauty of all nations. There are many beautiful and blooming youth of both sexes in many parts that seem to be under the lively impressions of the heavenly visitation; my spirit was at times nearly united to some of these, and warm desires were begotten in my heart for their preservation. May these remember their Creator in the days of their youth, when their offering will be truly of a sweet savour, and as sweet smelling incense to their God; for this end has He in His

gracious condescension visited them, that they should be redeemed from the pollutions that are in the world, and that by giving up faithfully in this the day of their early visitation, and dwelling under the turnings of His holy hand, they may be fitted, qualified, and so become vessels of honour in His house, to His praise, and their own peace and consolation. But I was jealous over some of them, with a godly jealousy, lest they were not sufficiently sensible of the blessings bestowed upon them; they felt the warmth of the Sun of Righteousness shining upon them, and the precious unity of their living brethren and sisters—they were enjoying the comforts of this summer season, but not enough attending on the work in themselves to which they were called—were loitering in the market-place, and permitting the blessed day of God's visitation to be passing by [unimproved], and the night stealing upon them in which the work cannot be done. To such this language is truly applicable,—"Work while it is called to-day, lest darkness come upon you." When the springs of love and dedication to God are dried up, and the tenderness of spirit lost in the cares of the world, they lose that dignity and true nobility which this precious visitation would have crowned them with; instead of being covered with living zeal as with a cloak, and being made men and women for God, and testimony-bearers

for his Truth, they become dry and formal professors, and not receiving their daily food from heaven which only can keep the soul alive unto God, they live upon their former experiences when the Lord's candle shone upon them, are little better than burdens to the living, and their lives are without [the true] honour, their hearts not being right in the sight of God. May such as these dear visited ones prize their calling, and be willing to open to Him who has mercifully knocked at their door, seeking for entrance, that He may sup with them and they with Him—then indeed may it be said, "Salvation is come to that house."

My beloved friend, Louisa Strangman, and I took each other in marriage on the 9th of Fourth Month, 1783, in a meeting for worship in Mountmellick, after an engagement on my mind for her of about eight years' continuance, which time had many deep and trying exercises in it, the prospect at times opening with clearness, and afterwards closing and shutting the door of hope. I was favoured with her company nearly twenty-three years, much to my comfort and consolation. When, under the counsels of Heavenly wisdom, and in the Divine fear, man and woman are united together and become one in the Lord, baptized together, and drinking of the same cup that their Lord and Master drank of, being of one heart and one mind, dedi-

cated to the Lord's service, helping one another to obey His holy requirings without grudging—these when they are brought together, it is by a way they know not of, (neither the outward eye nor judgment of man can comprehend it), and walking by that faith which is the evidence of what they do not see outwardly, the end thereof is peace.

[Previous to his marriage he received the following letter from T. Greer :—]

FROM THOMAS GREER TO JOHN CONRAN.

Dungannon, *Third Month 30th, 1783.*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have repeatedly turned over thy request to be at Mountmellick next Fourth-day week, but do not find that I can make it convenient with regard to matters of duty, which I see no way of putting by. Do not, however, thence conclude it is for want of affectionate regard either to thee or Louisa. I have long loved her with that love which is pure and unmixed, and it would I think be a pleasing matter to be present at the solemnization of your marriage ; I trust you will be favoured with the company of the Master, and then it matters not how few disciples attend, as the wine will doubtless be good and

accompanied with a blessing, although it may be pronounced in silence.

This roll, which I have at times been eating of for some considerable time past, begins to grow bitter in the inner parts; I have pleaded and pleaded again mine unfitness, and have turned the fleece upon it more frequently than we are informed Gideon did upon his commission, yet find no release therefrom; I have therefore in my own mind given up thereunto, and at times feel a wish to be gone. I have looked as closely as I am capable of, as to the time and place of taking shipping, and seem easiest at the thoughts of stealing away through Scotland, without previous sound of trumpet or other signal of important embassy; and it looks as if I must turn out all alone, like another scape-goat, bearing my own burden of infirmities, as well as those of the people where my lot may be cast: but this I through mercy know, that He who sends forth into the harvest is faithful, and will neither beget nor bring to the birth without giving power to bring forth; and upon this arm of Almighty power I desire that my trust may for ever be for fresh supplies of strength and wisdom.

The dispensation we are under is a glorious one, but the time and season appears to be very perilous—this last arises from the present state of the churches; the greater part of the people are chil-

dren of tradition, and many of the few that appear to be somewhat, have either clothed themselves with an outside appearance, or are led away thereby, inso-much that *Rachel's voice* may everywhere be heard, by those who have ears to hear and hearts to feel for her. But what will unprofitable bemoaning avail? I believe it to be the mind of the great and good Master that the camp should be searched as with fresh-lighted candles, that every false covering may be seen, and every covering short of His Spirit be brought to judgment; may He in mercy to His church and people yet fit and qualify for this service, and send forth fishers to fish, and hunters to hunt the people home in their minds to that Divine principle of saving grace, which alone can bring salvation to their houses, and give them to see in the unerring glass of Truth the deformity of profession without possession, and of form without power. Then would the language of lamentation cease, and the poor baptized messengers' sorrows would be turned into gladness of heart. My pen has run on in some sort unwittingly into some strokes which I had no view of when I sat down, but I seem free in thus communing a little with thee, and I may add that of late it is rather rare that I feel an openness to commune so with any; notwithstanding my thoughts have been as much (if not more) engaged about these things as in any

part of my life ; but it has been my lot to feel and suffer very much in private, having been almost cut off (in my own apprehension) from the sympathy of others, and this I conceive to be for some good purpose, which in the end will be manifested, and we must learn to wait in patience for the fulness of time in all things.

Our men's meeting is to be held next Fourth-day ; if my feelings of duty continue I propose then laying my concern before that meeting, in order to my obtaining a certificate to be addressed to friends of such counties in Britain as it may concern. Although I think I feel heavier than I did any of the former four times I have been engaged in visiting meetings in that land, I do not see the extent of my intended visit ; but see enough, and clear enough, to draw me from home, and feel a wish to take a range of meetings in the northern counties before the Yearly Meeting comes on, and then feel my way and follow the pointings of that Wisdom which is profitable and best able to direct from step to step therein. At the same time I fully expect my faith will be proved from day to day, as I pass along in the arduous warfare ; and what but conflicts can the poor messengers expect whilst in this militant state ? I am certain if we are upon the right foundation it must be the case. I therefore look for my share of them ; nor should we grow weary of suffer-

ing with the Seed, but with cheerful resignation bear our respective parts of what may remain for us to fill up of the sufferings of our holy and blessed Helper, who rejoices in beholding the patient resignation of His tribulated followers, and whose holy Arm is underneath to support and preserve above the waters.

Farewell: I feel a wish for thine and L.'s present comfort and everlasting welfare, and that you may be enabled, like Zacharias and Elizabeth, to walk in all the commandments of the Lord blameless. My dear love to her, and accept the same thyself from thy sincere friend,

THOMAS GREER.

After we were married we attended the Half-year's Meeting in Dublin; and in the Seventh Month I engaged in a family visit in Ballyhagen, and had the company of two valuable elders. The meeting at Ballyhagen I thought a very low time, and once or twice I felt as if I should be altogether a castaway from that Divine grace which had visited me: yet, through the arising of Divine Life in my heart, I was mercifully enabled to go forth in a testimony to God's goodness, acquainting them how discouraging the prospect was to me at first, to visit a people that was peeled and scattered amongst the people with whom they dwelt—that I remem-

bered the vision which the holy apostle formerly had of the sheet which was let down from heaven, knit at the four corners, which I compared to their meeting which had been gathered by the wisdom and power of God, and knit and enclosed by the hedge of His holy discipline; but that I saw it was filled with unclean beasts and the creeping things of the earth—that I was very unwilling to proceed, and refused to go as long as I dare; still the marvellous loving-kindness of Divine mercy continued to call, saying, “ Arise, Peter, slay and eat ”—slay those things with the sword of my Spirit, or there is no eating for those servants who do not obey the command of their Lord! We had three sittings with near a hundred who were not in unity, wherein my service opened beyond my expectation, having to feel great poverty and weakness, yet experienced Divine mercy extended to be unto me mouth and wisdom, tongue and utterance, to show this class the great loss they have sustained by going out of the garden enclosed, and thereby losing the heavenly fellowship of Christ’s blessed Spirit who called those (by His Spirit), that had their spiritual dwellings in this enclosure, His sister and spouse, &c. In our proceeding through the families, the first five of the Quarterly Meeting queries were generally read and answered, which brought forth some suitable and close remarks, and I thought was of considerable service.

There appears to be a great deficiency in the attendance of meetings, and ignorance among too many of the principles they profess, as well as very great rawness in religion. They seemed to receive the word of exhortation affectionately and patiently, and I thought there was a degree of fresh visitation afforded to some, if they will on their parts abide under it. As I passed on in this service, I thought it one of the most useful parts of our religious discipline, when suitably performed, waiting in the families upon the opening of that Divine counsel which is profitable for all things, and shews to them as it were their natural face in a glass; which, after they have been favoured to see, too many go away and straightway forget what manner of men they are. It seemed as if darkness had covered the earth, and gross darkness the hearts of this high professing people. I was more enlarged in this visit than I had been before, and often admired how I was sometimes led to speak, having close doctrine to drop to the lukewarm, the indifferent, the outside professor, the negligent, and those who forget that Hand which made them, as it were, days without number; and had in gospel love to call to such as were resting in a name to live, yet were dead as to the life and substance of true religion, to come home to that true rest which is prepared for the righteous, and them only. Upon the whole, I believe the service was

owned at times by the Great Master of our assemblies, who was pleased to help us with a little help under trying painful baptisms, in which we had to visit the precious holy seed of life, which was oftentimes to be found in a state of bondage and oppression. Yet we were favoured to feel the Son of peace to be in some of these poor dwellings, and then we had to salute that house in peace. I was glad I was there, though I went forth very much in the cross, and in poverty, having very seldom for three months before opened my mouth in public testimony. But it is well for that servant whom his Master finds watching when He cometh, He will make him ruler over His household; and it must be in His authority we rule if we ever are of any real service in His family. I was favoured to return with a sheaf, and had to look back and believe that I had left nothing undone which I apprehended I should do: the praise is to that holy and great Being to whom the work belongs, and it is His works only which can praise Him! Amen!

Having felt a concern for some months to pay a religious visit to Friends' families in Ballinderry meeting, and obtaining the approbation of our meeting, and my dear friend, James Christy, the elder, joining me in it, we set out on the 8th of the Tenth Month, 1783, and in the course of our visit had two meetings with between forty and fifty persons not

in membership. We had some very painful baptisms, some of the most stripping times I had met with of late, among dry formalists; but we were favoured to get through the service in peace.

In this year of my marriage I had thought to get leave to stay at home and attend all the meetings as they fell in course, which I think we always did when health permitted, for my dear wife was as zealously concerned, if not more so than I was; [but] I felt an engagement on my mind to visit the families of Friends in Lurgan and Moyallen meetings, and afterwards those of Coothill and Oldcastle meetings, which I proceeded in, accompanied by my friend, James Christy. I thought this visit was favoured with a degree of openness towards some young people, but it appeared there was not much help to be expected from their elders, who were too much engaged in their worldly concerns. At Oldcastle there was more order and regularity preserved; meetings are kept up, and the testimonies supported; nevertheless, there appears to be too much of sitting down at ease, and not enough of making use of the time and talent to the praise of Him who gave it. I was mercifully favoured to reach my own habitation with the evidence of peace in my bosom, and found my dear wife well, who soon after gave birth to a son.

I had no more engagements from home during the

remainder of this year, but attended on my outward concerns, (with meetings as they came in course,) for as Solomon said, "there is a time for every purpose under heaven;" our great and good Master knows what things we stand in need of, and leaves us at liberty at times, with His blessing, to procure them; as the apostle declared his own hands had ministered to his necessities.

In looking over some memorandums of my labours in the ministry, I must acknowledge I have been only an unprofitable servant, and have nothing to trust to for the hope of a blessed immortality but the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, who was the Author, and I humbly trust and hope will be the Finisher of my faith.

FROM CHRISTIANA HUSTLER TO JOHN CONRAN,

Ayton, *Ninth Month* 18th, 1784.

DEAR FRIEND,

I have often wished to salute thee and thy dear L. by a few lines, since you have been united by those outward ties which, I think you both know, I had beheld in prospect, as believing them to be in the pointing of Best Wisdom for you both, and therefore felt myself nearly interested in the completion of. I have felt thus drawn not only as bound in gratitude to acknowledge the many evidences received, both when present with thee and since my

return from your land, of thy kind attention and remembrance, but also as expressive of my continued sisterly regard and affection, which I feel to remain a debt due to you. I have often with great nearness beheld you comfortably settled, and I believe in your right allotment, and where I have no doubt of your mutually strengthening each other's hands, as you stand in that allotment Divine Wisdom has placed you in, and under the sense of that unmerited mercy and parental care so graciously continued, still adopting with feeling energy, that becoming and needful language, "What shall I render to thee for all thy mercies, Oh! thou Preserver of men?"

Well, my dear friends, may you and I ever be enabled to press forward (leaving the things that are behind) toward the mark, for the prize set before us, however arduous and tribulated the path; that neither heights, nor depths, principalities nor powers, things present, nor yet to come, may ever be able to separate us from that love which we have been mercifully enabled in days past to prefer to all things visible; and may we be enough engaged so to run as that we may obtain, is the principal desire of my mind, I think I may truly say, at this time.

I have often, dear friend, been afraid thou shouldst construe my silence, so long continued, into an unkind return for thy part of a correspondence

which, however undeserving I may appear to be of, has been greatly valued by me, and which nothing but the deep poverty that has been the almost unvaried clothing of my spirit, and has hitherto discouraged from prosecuting many attempts already made, would have hindered thy receiving ample testimonials of long ere this. And though at present I can by no means boast of better things, yet as I am often afresh convinced of the loss I sustain by giving way to these feelings, I wish to break through by telling thee how acceptable a letter from thee would be, to tell me how you are, and how your dear child comes on ; I think if I could convey myself for one hour to thy house, to thy little room, to see you together, and to converse and have sweet fellowship, as in days past, it would feel comfortable.

As to myself, and my own movements, I have little to say, having seldom to my own feelings been able to keep my head above water : I am at present with our valuable friend, Rebecca Jones, who came over with Thomas Ross and Mehetabel Jenkins (now in your land,) and divers other Friends, a little before the last Yearly Meeting, where believing it right for myself to be, and she willing to accept of my company down into the north, we came to the Quarterly (or what are called the Yearly) Meetings at Colchester, Woodbridge,

and Norwich, taking the meetings in the way, and after them most of those in Norfolk, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire.—And now, with an earnest request that thou wilt again let me hear from thee, I must for the present bid thee dearly farewell, and with the affectionate salutation of my best love to thy whole self, remain your assured, though poor friend,

CHRISTIANA HUSTLER.

P. S. My late companion Phebe Marshall, is married to a Friend of Leeds meeting, whose name is James Blakes, I hope suitably.

Twelfth Month 6th.—Since writing the above, we attended our autumn Quarterly Meeting, proceeding pretty directly from thence into the counties of Durham, Northumberland, and through Scotland as far as Old Meldrum, returning last Seventh-day to this place (Whitehaven,) and hope to reach our Quarterly Meeting at Leeds the latter end of this month. Our friend John Hall, at whose house we lodged two nights, desired to be affectionately remembered to thee, and that I will inform thee he received an acceptable letter from thee at Birmingham, which he intends to answer shortly. He with my companion are both bravely, as was Rebecca Wright, whom we passed on her way to Scotland, accompanied by Martha Routh. Patience Brayton is I expect now in or near Cornwall, Samuel Emlen

and George Dillwyn and his wife in London, and by letters received, our worthy friend Robert Valentine is safely arrived in his own land before their Yearly Meeting in the Ninth Month which will be, and has been cause of joy, no doubt to his friends as well as himself. Once more farewell, C. H.

[It appears that Rebecca Jones visited Ireland in the ensuing year, no mention is made of her services in that nation by John Conran, but among his memoranda a remarkable farewell testimony is noted which she bore in a meeting at Dublin, in these words, viz: "The Master said to me, 'Thou came poor among this people—thou hast sat amongst them in much poverty—be content to leave them in much poverty—I have taken the crown from off their heads—let them wear dust and ashes my appointed time, then shall my light break forth as brightness, and I will be to them a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty.'"]

It is believed the following is the letter referred to by C. Hustler.]

TO JOHN CONRAN.

DEAR FRIEND,

Thou hast often been brought near to my mind, in that love which distance does not wear out, and I have often felt desires for thy preservation, for we

serve a good Master, and I can in humble thankfulness say, "that His mercies to us have been more than the hairs of our heads." I have tasted many bitter cups since I saw thee, but have often had to rejoice in humble thankfulness, that I have been brought to that state of resignation, wherein I could adopt the language, "I thank thee, oh! Father! may this cup pass from me, yet nevertheless not my will but thine be done, oh! God!" I believe it is good and also profitable for us experimentally to know and feel His will to be our sanctification; for we poor creatures have a deal of dross in us, and it is only by feeling [and submitting to] the furnace, made hotter and hotter, that the dross is separated from the pure gold, which loses nothing of its weight and value by being thus refined, but has this excellency in it, that it is more fit to receive the Heavenly image or inscription, that of "Holiness unto the Lord." I desire, while I am writing, that I may never forget the wormwood and the gall.

In much affection and regard, I am thy loving friend,

JOHN HALL.

CHAPTER IV.

1786. RELIGIOUS SERVICES IN ULSTER PROVINCE
—AND IN CARLOW MEETING—DEATH OF HIS
DAUGHTER—VISITS THE MEETINGS IN MUNSTER
PROVINCE—ILLNESS AND DEATH OF HIS WIFE
—RETURNS INTO MUNSTER.

The 1st of First Month, 1786, I set out under concern to pay a religious visit [again] to the families of Friends in Ballyhagan meeting: the weather was very severe with frost and snow most of the time, but as I apprehended I saw no other time open to proceed in it, I went forward, and had as before besides the sittings in the families, several meetings with about 180 persons not in membership. I found the life of religion to be low,—the form, which many rest in, too much neglected by others,—the plain language not kept to,—and a very general deficiency of attending week-day meetings, and First-day meetings by some; the sittings in the families were exercising, and the spring of the ministry low, yet at times we were favoured with the arising of Life when least expected—the lost sheep were sought after, and a renewed call and visitation extended to them, inviting them to the Father's

house, where there is bread enough and to spare ; but if they still continued to resist and rebel against the gracious invitations of Divine Mercy, that others would be called in, and fill their places at the Lord's table.

In the Eighth Month I paid a religious visit to the families of Friends in Charlemont meeting, under feelings of dear and heart-tendering love for them, and having been helped to perform the same, returned home with longing desires for their growth and establishment in the love of God through Christ Jesus.

In 1788, I felt the drawings of [Gospel] love in my mind to visit the families of Friends of Carlow Monthly Meeting, and was accompanied therein by my friend Richard Shackleton.

In the meeting for discipline of the National Meeting in the Fifth Month this year, I felt a secret requiring in my mind to consent to my dear wife going to the ensuing Yearly Meeting in London, to which I readily yielded, and it was very much to her satisfaction. She was there afterwards several times, when I accompanied her, always I may say to my edification and comfort ; being at times, on these occasions, made sensible that the Lord was still with Zion, and that the shout of a King was heard in her, which helped to confirm me in the faith in which I had believed—blessed be His holy name !

[No memoranda occur during the next seventeen years, in which interval he lost his beloved and only daughter; soon after this afflicting event he received the following letter of condolence from his friend Gervase Johnson, who was then travelling in the work of the ministry in America.]

FROM GERVASE JOHNSON TO JOHN CONRAN.

New York, *Fifth Month 23rd*, 1799.

DEAR FRIEND,

I received a letter last evening from a beloved friend, of the land that thou resides in, giving an account that thy dear and only daughter is deceased, and as I have thought it to be a great outward trial to thee and thy beloved wife, I desire to sympathize with you, my dear friends, in your trouble; but knowing that the Lord giveth and taketh away at His own good pleasure, I hope that you both are reconciled, and contented with His Divine will, and in your experience in being thus resigned, to give her up to the disposal of her heavenly Father, you will feel your bitter trials to be sweetened, which I doubt not is your comfortable experience. Oh! my dear friends, knowing that all things will be parted from us, or we from them, is great teaching to us, that our sure happiness is in the great Giver of all good gifts, by loving, fearing, and serving Him; under these considerations I feel the encouraging

language to arise in my heart on your accounts, that although many are the trials of the righteous, the Lord in His own time delivereth out of them all, and if they faint not, they will receive an inheritance where all sorrow and tears will be done away. In my writing to thee, my dear friend, in thy tried situation, it is brought to my remembrance, thy sympathizing brotherly regard for me in my deep trials, when about setting out on this trying journey, thy feeling sympathy on that important occasion, I hope I shall never forget.

Farewell, my beloved friend, my love is to thee, and thy dear wife, and son, and to all inquiring friends, and I am thy friend,

GERVASE JOHNSON.

P.S.—This Yearly Meeting comes on the 28th inst., after it is over I have thought of going towards New England.

[The reader is referred to the Memorials of Rebecca Jones, p. 279, for an interesting allusion to Gervase Johnson.]

FROM SARAH GRUBB TO JOHN CONRAN.

Anner Mills, *Second Month 26th*, 1801.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

I am inclined to salute thee and my beloved Louisa, hoping that I am not wholly kept out of your remembrance in love, for I can aver that I love you,

and often visit you in your affliction with the best desires my feeble mind can aspirate. I feel renewedly for you on the approaching Quarterly Meeting—oh! what a time for the most approved! how hard to steer faultless! and yet under the banners of the Captain of the soul's salvation, conquest is gained over evil in all its intricacies. Nothing has yet happened that can make us dubious; the Lamb and His followers, will have the victory; the point is *to be His followers*, and then all the fiery darts of the wicked one shall fail. A sore trial has come on the church, and it behoves all who wish the restoration of good order, to take strait steps, for there is not a disposition to feel compunction at cutting off the skirt of the robe of the anointed: the language may well be uttered, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy," and I trust some tried depreciated ones may say, "When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me," &c. Quietness seems one of the best weapons of defence, not a withholding through fear of man, but a watching unto prayer, that nothing may be attempted without the ability that cannot be foiled; great must be the suffering of the honest-hearted, but if it tend to deepen, if it awaken to righteousness, we may hope it will work for good, to those who hold fast the form of sound words, and are not shaken in mind, and that the dear people who stray from the fold, may be brought to see their error.

I am comforted for your sakes, that the dear Scotch women Friends are with you, we think Elizabeth [Wigham] a well-instructed scribe, and her precious B——, walking in the same safe path. By letter from Moate, we find you are also to have dear M. S. and S. W.; the best wishes I am capable of attend you all—that nothing may be able to take you from under the sanctifying power of Truth, nor dismay you from espousing its cause, when favoured with the qualification. Probably you may have heard that at our Quarterly Meeting, a hope was raised that the Society of Friends was not yet forsaken, that continued mercy was extended for its members to walk acceptably, it was a memorable time. Dear Mary Dudley has been mostly confined since; Richard Jordan is now in our province, and we are daily expecting Samuel Smith. I apprehend Mary Ridgeway is shortly to be in London, in the course of her service. Sarah Lynes has had the concurrence of her Monthly Meeting to hold public meetings in Friends' meeting houses about London. Mortality awfully visits many of our dear friends and acquaintance: we miss the sweet spirit of my sister Grubb, she died as she lived, an example of meekness, suffered conflict by the apprehension of omitted duty, but cast herself on the mercy of Providence.

S. G.

Ninth Month 6th, 1805.—I left home under a concern which had attended my mind, to visit Friends in Munster province, and some parts of Leinster, and arrived in Waterford on the 14th. Next day I attended the fore and afternoon meetings there, under great discouragement and bodily weakness, having with much difficulty reached the city; but was enabled through Divine favour to answer the service required of me in both meetings, to my own peace and solid satisfaction. [After performing the service required of him in those provinces, he says,] In this visit I had to pass through many baptizing exercises, the state of the church being very low in sundry places; the cares of this world, and the eager pursuit after the lawful things of it, have, I fear, blinded the eyes of many, so that they make excuses that they cannot accept the invitations which have been so frequently held out by the servants, saying, “Behold all things are ready!” In some of these mortifying labours, wherein the creaturely part was humbled, I had peace. When I got to Mountmellick on the 12th of Tenth Month, I expected to have gone by Rathangan to Dublin, and home; but there I felt a fresh exercise on my mind drawing me to attend the Quarterly Meeting at Waterford, and after two days weighing it I gave up to the requiring, believing it was from the Lord; and in that meeting, [especially] in the meetings of

discipline and select meeting, I felt my mind much engaged in the service of them, which afforded me peace, and I left that city with a comfortable hope that I had been in my place there.

In passing through the county of Wexford my covering was deep poverty, except at Enniscorthy where I felt some openness, principally to strangers, to whom my spirit was drawn in much love, which I believe proceeded from Him who is love, to salute them and invite them to come and partake of the dainties of His table. As I travelled on, my mind sometimes looked towards home, but I could not feel any thing but a deep baptizing exercise of trouble, which at those times sunk my spirits greatly; I endeavoured to support myself under these conflicts with the impression, that I had not lightly undertaken this journey, having had it on my mind about fourteen months or more, and I went on it in the faith and full belief it was necessary I should not hold back any longer.

I sat three meetings in Dublin silent, and since to this date have only spoken in testimony once. My spirit feels forsaken, ashes are on my head spiritually, feeling myself made inwardly sensible, that I am altogether unworthy and unfit to speak in the name of the Lord, almost saying with Moses, "Send by whom thou wilt send," for I neither desire, nor can I go; and in this disposition I rejoice that I am set at liberty from dealing any more

with a people whose ears are dull of hearing—eyes they have, but they see not the beauty there is in the Truth—hearts they have, but they understand not the things which concern their everlasting peace! May the Lord, in His gracious condescending mercy, once more say to His people, Arise, and shake yourselves from the dust of the earth, and put on thy beautiful garments, Oh! Jerusalem; that Zion may once more become the praise of the whole earth, that she may again travail and bring forth children, to the praise of the great Name!—*Twelfth Month 19th, 1805.*

I travelled home the 5th of the Eleventh Month from the above journey, and found my dear wife in a very low way and poor state of health, and her disorder increasing rapidly. She continued to sink until the 4th of Twelfth Month, when she quietly departed, and I trust, has obtained a mansion in her heavenly Father's house, which I believe she faithfully laboured for from the age of about fifteen years. At that early age, I have heard, she shewed marks of Divine visitation, and giving up to the heavenly vision, she was enabled thereby to order her conversation in such a circumspect manner, as to be a good example to the youth who were cotemporary with her; her presence among them kept down all levity without using any austere remonstrances, or giving such advice as seemed to claim superiority over them. She [thus in the morning of life]

preached the cross to the beloved youth, by daily taking of it up, and praised her Lord and Master, as being worthy of being obeyed, by obeying Him. Her company was sought by her elders, who saw in her that wisdom was not confined to grey hairs, nor an unspotted life to old age; for she manifested, that by an early and faithful dedication to the operation of the Divine grace in her heart, both might be shown forth, in a conversation evidently coupled with the fear and love of God, to the comfort and consolation of many Friends who were her intimates. The first time I saw her, which was at a funeral at Dublin, her appearance to me was that of a disciple of Christ. I was then under the discipline of the cross, having been united to the Lord's church and family about two years.

[After we were married] she proved to me a faithful and exercised companion in many tribulations, the worst of which was from false brethren; and being a woman of an excellent and discerning spirit, was made useful to me in advice and counsel, having the qualification and being in the station of an elder in the church; which gift she exercised in this Quarterly Meeting oftentimes in great weakness and fear, being not only modest in exercising her talent, but also diffident, preferring others to herself. Poverty was very often the covering of her spirit, but it had a blessing with it, for

she was of much use, and had great place hereaway, so that her removal is deeply regretted by the few who are well concerned in this quarter. I may say she was faithful in her attendance of meetings, both at home and the Yearly and Half-Year's Meetings in Dublin, where her value was acknowledged by her sisters sometimes choosing her as clerk. She was four times at the Yearly Meeting in London; the first time she acted as assistant-clerk, which made her acquainted with many valuable Friends in that nation, whose friendship and sympathy she obtained.

The last Monthly Meeting she attended was in company with three Friends from England, who were travelling in Truth's service, when I was from home, one of whom, I was told, in the Women's Meeting, bore testimony that there was one present whose day's work was over—that He who had been her morning light would become her evening song—that there was a mansion prepared for her, and that her rest would be glorious. When her sickness in the beginning did not appear very alarming, she, on waking from sleep once told me she expected to die of that sickness, and that she had had a secret intimation of it in that sleep. From that time she turned her thoughts heavenward, and was very frequent in supplication that the Lord would look upon her in mercy. She at one time expressed her unqualified belief in the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ, through

whom she expected remission of sins. She said the principles of Friends were the principles of Truth, that she always believed in them, and was willing to lay down her life for the testimony of Jesus. After she had been silent for many hours, and I scarcely expected she would speak again, I heard her saying in a low voice, "Who is this great enemy that surrounds me? (meaning death, I believe,) Christ will overcome him." She called up her maid-servants and gave them excellent advice to the tendering of their hearts, desiring them to make truth and honesty their guide; she prayed fervently for me and her son, who was present, advised him to be affectionate and dutiful to me, and that when I looked on him I should remember her. She desired to be remembered to sundry Friends, and said that she loved every one. Thus was this beloved partner taken from me, after living in sweet fellowship upwards of twenty-two years. Many times I was bowed in humble thankfulness to the great and good Giver of this first of earthly blessings I had received at His merciful hands. I sensibly feel the loss I have of her sweet society, but this is in degree compensated for by the lively hope I have, that it is her everlasting gain. As I stood at the grave my spirit felt clothed with such serenity and stillness, that my sorrow ceased and resignation took up the place of it; and though there was not any public

testimony borne, yet the sweet peace that was felt was more encouraging than words. Her remains were interred in Friends' burying-ground, at Lisburn, the 6th of Twelfth Month, 1805, aged fifty years and eight months.

FROM S. GRUBB TO JOHN CONRAN, ON OCCASION
OF THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE.

Anner Mills, *Twelfth Month 11th*, 1805.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

I am obliged and consoled by thy letter of the 7th inst. It is a great favour to feel an anchor to the soul under such circumstances as thine, and it seems a beatitude of the Divine Being to sustain when he sees meet to deprive us of our dearest ties. I have found Him near to me at such junctures, and have traced it in many instances, but like other beams of sunshine, it withdraws after a season, and then we feel our stripped state, which would be insupportable, but for the recollection that the everlasting Arm had been underneath. Thou wilt, my dear cousin, have frequent necessity to take this retrospect, and to supplicate for a continuance of sustaining help; for the endearingness of her whom thou hast been deprived of will often break in upon thy solitary mind; thou wilt miss her as Lady Rachel Russell said of her husband, "sleeping, waking, walking, at meals," and in divers other

ways ; so that all will seem insipid without her. I had no doubt she would die the death of the righteous, and that her latter end would be like theirs. I believe she was a nursing mother to many. I wish thy desire for us, who must follow, may be brought into effect ; I have many and well grounded fears for myself, it often seems as if nothing but a miraculous interference could rescue me from the accuser of the brethren. I trust thou feels peaceful in the winding up of thy service in this province ; it must have consoled thy dear wife that thou yielded obedience to that requiring ; I thought thou seemed preserved in a humble state of mind, may it be the covering of thy spirit to the end of time !

I am thy sincere friend,

S. GRUBB.

Tenth Month 8th, 1807.—I left home for the Quarterly Meeting at Waterford.

11th.—First-day morning meeting was a very low season to me ; the state of the Jewish church, in the time of Nicodemus, was opened before me, who, though a master in Israel, and a ruler among the Jews, appeared to know nothing of the spiritual doctrine of regeneration, though perhaps well instructed in the questions and traditions of his church ; this may be the state of too many amongst us, who have heard by the ear, and their fathers

have declared to them the truths of the Gospel, yet if they do not experience the new birth in themselves, and hear and obey the voice of Christ, they are standing on the same foundation this ruler was, and cannot clearly comprehend the meaning and intent of this doctrine no more than he could.

The Quarterly Meeting was held the 17th, 18th, and 19th, they were seasons of trial to me, being under a burden which I was unable to lay down.

20th.—Meeting for worship at parting: I felt a desire to stay over the week-day meeting, and afterwards to go to Clonmel to be at their meetings on First-day.

25th.—At Clonmel, the evening meeting was to me a cloudy and low time, but a little opening appearing, I was enabled to show that the form did not entitle us to be children of the promise, though we may call Abraham our father; I had also to call to the worldly-minded, &c., and was favoured with liberty in this meeting to my comfort. This day I felt a pointing in my mind to stay over the Monthly Meeting here next Fifth-day; these intimations can only be compared to holding forth a finger to a distant object, yet I am afraid but to acknowledge them, and when fulfilled they afford peace.

29th.—Monthly Meeting, a low time to me; I sat in silence in the first meeting, and had one observa-

tion to make, on a case before the meeting, whether Friends should receive a written acknowledgment from a person who had taken an oath, which he condemned as inconsistent with our discipline, and against the spirit of the Gospel—a Friend thought it was not full enough : I remarked, that when the prodigal remembered his father's house, his father went forth to meet him and brought him in ; I felt tenderness to cover my mind, and was fearful the band which united him to the Society would snap if strained much tighter.

On reaching home on the 9th of Eleventh Month, I felt peace and satisfaction from this journey. When I was in Waterford, I felt at times as if I should be obliged to enter on a family visit there, which very much humbled me in viewing the weight of the service and feeling my own weakness, but through Divine favour it passed away and I was easy.

FROM GEORGE STACEY TO JOHN CONRAN.

London, *Twelfth Month* 18th, 1807.

DEAR FRIEND,

The tender sympathy thou hast expressed in the situation of our dear child demands that I should not be long in acknowledging the receipt of thy letter, and this I can do the more gratefully as we

are favoured with some appearance of convalescence. For this prospect, and many other comforts and enjoyments, we are strongly called upon to manifest gratitude ; and I sometimes wish there was greater prevalence of this quality felt and displayed—a quality, which, when we consider our relative and dependent situation, and the goodness of the all-bounteous Source, ought to fill the mind ; but reflections like these are too often supplanted by the proprietorship we assume in those very enjoyments which the great Giver furnishes us with, and complacency in the gifts benumbs our perception of what is due to Him that gave them.

We feel much with thee in thy bereft and solitary situation, considering also that its poignancy is not likely to be abated by the aids, which some of us more favourably circumstanced derive, from the intercourse of feeling minds ; yet He whom thou lovest is omnipresent, and doubtless will apportion of His consolations as He gives to partake of trials, in such time and manner as shall ultimately tend to the soul's revivement and happiness : in holding this belief how much has the traveller Zionward the advantage even in this life, over him, whose hope perishes with time !

We had heard, through the pen of James Abell to one of our neighbours, of thy having paid an acceptable visit to some of the southern meetings,

and we are glad to find from thyself that the result is peaceful. From thy silence respecting the state of things in your province, I fear much of a consolatory kind cannot be said. Have any of those that withdrew found their way back, or is any disposition manifested to come more into the unity? If they could retrace their steps, and submit to be broken to pieces, they would perhaps be bound up again so as to be brighter than ever; but this work of humiliation is hard to flesh and blood! We had rather find an apology for our mis-steps in the supposed conduct of others, than come under that baptism which brings the sword upon all secret corruptions and disloyalty.

My wife joins in endeared love with thy affectionate friend,

GEORGE STACEY.

FROM JOHN CONRAN TO D. C.

DEAR FRIEND,

Thou hast been frequently the subject of my secret and serious meditations some years past, at a time also when a larger share of intimacy subsisted between us than has done of late: I beheld thee as a servant who had been honoured and dignified with a precious gift, or designed for usefulness and service in the church, I mean as a nursing mother in our Israel. His blessed eye, that is looking over

all His works, saw in that day the state of His church in this quarter, to use the metaphor recorded in Scripture on a similar occasion, "there was neither sword nor spear among forty thousand in Israel!" The Lord's ways are not as our ways, He employs secondary causes to bring about His gracious purposes, and which bear the resemblance of the usual means in human affairs. How often has He made use of His holy ordinance of marriage, to translate a living instrument from one quarter of the vineyard to another, even from one nation to another; and often this translation has been a means of raising them up, and qualifying them for usefulness and service in their new destination, in the wise ordering of Him who sleepeth not by day, nor slumbereth by night. And although the multitude, who are thus mercifully cared for, perceive not this His fatherly regard; yet He is thus, season after season, watching over His flock, and delegating the shepherds, giving them a charge, as He did to Peter formerly, to feed His sheep and His lambs, if he loved Him; happy indeed is that servant whom his Master, when He cometh to take an account of His servants, shall find so doing!

Now, my dear friend, I believe thy marriage was of this nature; natural affection was the outward means to bring thee here, but I believe the Lord's hand was underneath, to make use of thee, and

those talents He has entrusted thee with, for the service of His family in this quarter. If we may judge of great things by small, we may see with His truly dedicated and devoted servants, that almost every thought of their hearts is to be found doing their heavenly Father's will, so I am persuaded the holy Head and High Priest of the church is going to and fro, up and down, looking after the wants and necessities of His family, and affording them assistance one way or other. I have been jealous over thee, I trust with a degree of godly jealousy, [querying] how thou hast made use of thy Lord's money. The unfaithful steward, when under a sense of great poverty—to dig he would not, and to beg he was ashamed—wisely went among his Lord's debtors, asking how much they owed to their Lord; mayst thou, my dear friend, in much [sincerity] put the impartial query to thyself, how much dost *thou* owe? Talents are not given to any of us to lay up or bury, but to make use of to the praise of the Great Giver; thy candle has been lighted and placed on a candlestick, what for?—that it might enlighten the house, and show forth His praise. If it has done so it is well—it is not for me to judge; my concern at present is to awaken an inquiry, and put thee in mind that the hour is coming on thee and me, and perhaps is nearer than we may expect, when we must go forth and meet

the Bridegroom ; and happy will it be for those who shall be found ready to enter in with Him, and receive the blessed sentence of, " Well done, thou hast been faithful over the little, thou shalt be made joyful in the house of thy God ! "

Farewell, with near and brotherly affection I salute thee,

JOHN CONRAN.

CHAPTER V.

ATTENDS SUNDRY MEETINGS, FROM 1808 TO 1812—
VISITS THE FAMILIES IN WATERFORD, CLONMEL,
AND CORK—VARIOUS EXERCISES AND SERVICES
AROUND HOME.

Fourth Month 23rd, 1808.—I attended the Yearly Meeting in Dublin: some of the meetings I think were overshadowed with solemnity, which very much kept down the wisdom of man; a large committee of men and women were appointed, to consider the state of the Society as represented by the answers to the queries, they had sundry sittings, which were in general to satisfaction, and the state of things was pretty fully opened.

Fourth Month, 1809.—I attended the Yearly Meeting at Dublin as usual: the national committee produced some parts of the minutes of the National Meeting of Ireland, which they had been engaged in, to assimilate some of them to the English minutes, and to revise, and if needful, to abridge; that part which was finished was read and approved, and desired to be used in the place of all others.

I attended this year all the Quarterly Meetings

in this province, and all our own Monthly Meetings, and visited the families of Friends of Moyallen meeting, in company with Thomas Shillitoe, and William Neale of Mountrath meeting.

Fourth Month, 1810.—At the Yearly Meeting in Dublin, the remaining minutes were read and approved, and the whole ordered to be printed and distributed to the several Monthly Meetings. A committee of men and women Friends were appointed to consider the state of the several Quarterly Meetings, which was taken up in a solid manner; the many outrunnings in marriage, especially among the females, brought a lively concern over the committee to endeavour to find a remedy against this evil, and as it is most prevalent in the province of Ulster, where the largest share of Friends are in low circumstances, it was proposed and agreed to raise a fund through the nation, to be placed at the disposal of a suitable committee of that province, to encourage good conduct in the youth of both sexes, by assisting such with a sum of money as their funds will afford, on their entering into the engagements of life, either in marriage or suitable business, as the committee may think proper; this was agreed to, and an order sent to the different Quarterly Meetings to put forward such a subscription. I think we had cause to believe that some of our sittings were Divinely owned; also this committee,

in their care and concern for the body, and the preservation of the discipline.

Sixth Month.—I attended the Quarterly Meeting held at Richhill, and was very unwell with a cold which deprived me of my voice, so that I concluded that I could not speak intelligibly ; but in the afternoon meeting I felt the word of life strong in me to advocate several of our testimonies which the worldly spirit calls singularities, but was enabled to prove that they are consistent both with Scripture and reason. The testimony [of Truth] was set over these objectors, and the meeting concluded, I believe, to the satisfaction of Friends, and to my own admiration that I was so supported over my indisposition and hoarseness.

Seventh Month 12th.—I laid before the Monthly Meeting a concern which had attended my mind, to pay a visit to the families of Friends of Waterford Meeting, which had arisen when I was in that city near three years before, and had exercised my mind at sundry times since. Friends took it under consideration, and left me at liberty to pursue that and such other service as Truth might open for and require.

Eighth Month 27th.—Monthly Meeting at Waterford : I presented my certificate and laid my concern before Friends, who appointed a Friend to accompany me. In this meeting I had to remind them of

that declaration, that we have all sinned and fallen short, but how far, or the extent, we ought [each to seek] to know for ourselves. Our great adversary endeavours to palliate, and is very expert in using arguments to set us at ease in [our sins], but if we bring them to the discovering light of Christ in our minds, we shall see them as they are in the sight of God, where no palliations or excuses will cover them from His righteous judgments, which will be revealed against every thing that is not of His own begetting; therefore, I exhorted Friends to bring their deeds to this light that they may pass under the flaming sword, for nothing that is unclean, or done in the will of the creature, will be permitted to enter that kingdom which is purity, peace, and joy, in the Holy Spirit.

Ninth Month 27th.—I came to Clonmel, and entered on the visit there to Friends' families, and in concluding it was favoured with peace after many deep baptisms.

Tenth Month 20th.—The Quarterly Meeting at Waterford was attended by Henry Hull from New York Government in America, Martha Brewster from Bury, in England, and sundry other Friends. In the concluding sitting of the Select Meeting I laid before Friends a concern that had attended my mind for some time past, to visit the families of Cork Meeting, which, after deliberate consideration,

was united with, and I set out on the 27th for Clonmel, in company with Henry Hull.

28th.—Henry Hull was largely and instructively engaged in the morning and afternoon meetings at Clonmel.

30th—A large public meeting, at which was supposed to be about 700 persons; our testimonies were explained in a satisfactory manner by Henry Hull, on whom the whole of the public service fell.

Eleventh Month 8th.—Monthly Meeting at Cork, I laid before Friends my prospect of visiting the families of that meeting, with which the meeting concurred, and Henry Hull offered to accompany me to some of the families.

[John Conran was enabled to perform this service, and after attending Limerick and Mountmellick meetings, also the Quarterly Meeting held at Carlow, from the 29th of the Twelfth Month to the 1st of First Month 1811, inclusive, returned home, on which occasion he remarks]: I do not find that I have much to say, only that I endeavoured to be faithful to that which had the appearance of duty, often labouring in little and low places, at which times duty and faith were closely tried; and after having done the little, the only reward was not to feel condemnation, and therewith to be content. On leaving Cork I felt my mind oftentimes broken into tenderness, and in much love to Friends of that

meeting, which continued with me pretty much to Limerick, and was the same love that drew me to engage in that service.

Fourth Month 25th, 1811.—I left home to attend the Yearly Meeting in Dublin. In this meeting we had the company of Henry Hull from North America. I had a suffering time, mostly in silence, especially in the meetings for discipline, which to me were heavy. I returned home after the Meeting.

In the Eleventh Month, I accompanied Ann Burgess from Leicester round the Lough. We held public meetings in the following places to good satisfaction, viz.: Newtown, Donaghadee, Belfast, Antrim, Grange, Ballinacree, Colerain, and Moyallen.

Twelfth Month 1st.—The Quarterly Meeting in Lurgan, which was large and attended by S. G. and Ann Burgess, both of whom I thought were much favoured, being well qualified to open the principles to those who are without. The meeting for discipline was conducted in harmony, and the select meeting again re-instated, which had been laid aside for about twelve years.

JOHN CONRAN TO ANN BURGESS.

Twelfth Month 14th, 1811.

DEAR FRIEND,

I received thy kind and sympathizing letter, which was truly acceptable to me. Thy proposed plan of

my removing into Lisburn, and getting shelter in some Friend's family, I have often considered heretofore ; but in viewing in my mind the several situations there among Friends, I could not see any one in that Light which is profitable to direct, therefore, for the present have abandoned that design. If I took a lodging there, dieting by myself would be uncomfortable ; and a house, which I once inclined to, might prove too burdensome. So that, my dear and much respected friend, I do not see a better way at present than to wait the Lord's time, apprehending the trials and provings I now pass through are by His permission, for further purification and refinement.

When I went abroad with thee it was in the cross, having a great dislike to that desolated part of our province. Since we separated I have remembered with secret satisfaction our movements, and that inward union and fellowship which flows from our holy Head to the living members of His body ; this the *world* knows not of, their friendships are of this world ; “ but,” says our holy High Priest, “ ye are not of this world, I have called you out of this world,” its pursuits and vanities ! Blessed call indeed, oh ! that all who heard it were obedient to it ; their peace would flow as a river, and their hearts and hands would be lifted up with thanksgivings and praises on the banks of deliverance.

Thou art serving a good Master, and I believe with faithful dedication, be thou faithful unto death as well as unto life, that thou mayst inherit the crown of life. The apostle says he was in deaths oft, a state of deep humiliation necessary for the Lord's favoured servants to experience; this is the preparation of the heart which is not of man, it is of the Lord, because here we can cast down every crown and high imagination of ourselves; and the baptism sometimes is so deep that we scarcely dare look up to Heaven only to say, "Have mercy on me, I am a sinner." Although we are buried with Him, yet when thus tried, remember, my dear friend, for thy consolation, the precious life which at times we do much rejoice in is safe, being hid with Him in God, the sure hiding place and refuge of the just and righteous of all ages. Though I write these things to thee, they are I believe thy own already; yet in these baptisms our faith is tried to a hair's breadth, but out of the mouths of two or three witnesses the word is established.

J. C.

JOHN CONRAN TO JAMES ABELL, (UNDER
DEEP TRIALS.)

Dublin, *Fifth Month* 1st, 1812.

DEAR FRIEND,

I received thy very acceptable letter by our mutual friend, John Leckey, which came in a time

when my mind was dipped into sympathy with the Seed, which I feared would be felt in a suffering state in various sittings of the approaching solemnity. On the approach of these solemn seasons my lot is a suffering one, and though painful to the natural part in us, we ought not to repine in being companions with our dear Lord and Master, and accounted worthy to suffer with Him; that when our measure is filled up in His militant church, we may be favoured to have a mansion of His preparing in His triumphant church, in His holy presence, and in the company of His saints and angels, where the wicked cease from troubling, and all sorrows are wiped away. This state, which is attainable, and is set before us that we may endeavour to attain it, is worth patiently submitting to the light afflictions of this present season for. Though we are at seasons crowned with the heavenly gift, yet, if the wicked are permitted to make it a crown of thorns, and we have to feel the sharpness of them as well as the shame, the disciple is not above or better than his Master; He also was crowned in both capacities, but the submissive language of His spirit was, (let us remember it,) "Not my will but thy will, O Father, be done." His holy will concerning the members of His church is sanctification, and if His unerring wisdom chooses the furnace for that end, He can bring us forth as He did the three children

formerly, in safety, their garments undestroyed, and their bodies without the smell of fire upon them, for the angel of His Divine presence was with them, and is still with His afflicted little ones, who are preferring Him to their chiefest joy in this world.

I remember the saying of a dear friend, Thomas Scattergood, under a holy influence, to me when under deep suffering, "Satan hath desired to have thee to sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not;" and his holy prayer proved availing, even to this very day, enabling to speak well of the Lord's name, because His mercy endureth, and will endure from one generation to another. I nearly sympathize with thee, my dear friend, in thy present suffering state, but not as Job's friends, in a similar trying dispensation, with presumption; no my dear friend, but under a full persuasion that thy trials are in unutterable wisdom, to purify and to bring thee to a more full acknowledgment of the depths of His counsel—that thou hadst known Him like Job, in an unspotted life and conversation, and brought praise to His Truth. Yet here is not to be our rest, but to obtain a further knowledge of Him, in which every other consideration may be abased, and we bow ourselves before Him in dust and ashes, that He alone may be confessed, and His name (power) be exalted in us and over all, blessed for ever! I salute thee, my dear

friend, in the fresh feeling of that love which I believe flows at this time from the Fountain that will never be drawn dry, though flowing from generation to generation, at which the Lord's flock have at all times been made to drink, and of which the flocks of the stranger cannot partake. And may He who dwelt in the bush and it was not consumed, dwell in thee, and thou in Him, so that the arrows of the archers may be blunted and turned aside, and the Lord may have the acknowledgment of praise, is the sincere desire of thy affectionate brother,

JOHN CONRAN.

TO JOHN CONRAN.

ESTEEMED FRIEND,

May the protecting Arm of Divine Power shield thee through the yet remaining conflicts, that thou may know a safe landing in the haven of an eternal rest! Thy love has been great to the Beloved of souls, manifested by thy attachment to His cause on the earth, which thou hast espoused and adhered unto in a day of shaking, when many were blown away, and have mingled with the chaff that floats in the air! What a favour in the part of the county thou lives in! Oh! that thou mayst know the Ancient of days to be with thee now when old age is making its ravages, that thou mayst be the encourager of the younger branches of the family whom the Head

of the church may bring forth into usefulness. My spirit was united to some of those, for whose establishment in the Truth I have desired, that the walls of our Zion, which have been marred, may be completely restored and built up, that there may be rendered unto the Lord of Hosts the glory that is due. Then will He restore unto Israel judges as at the first, and counsellors as in the beginning! In the fellowship of the Gospel I conclude, remaining thy friend,

HENRY HULL.

Fifth Month, 1812.—I attended the Yearly Meeting in Dublin, which was large, and at times favoured with a living spring of Gospel ministry, to the edifying and comfort of the living part of the family. The meetings of business were also favoured with the calming influence of Divine Power, so as to cause the waves to be still, which were at times distressing, occasioned by three appeals from the province of Munster, which has been cause of exercise to some there for several years past, and occasioned a breach of love among them. The state of that province coming weightily before the meeting at this time, a visit to it was appointed, and my name was set down for that service with five others, to meet at Limerick Quarterly Meeting in the Seventh Month, and to proceed further as Truth may open the way.

In the Seventh Month, I left home to attend the Quarterly Meeting at Limerick, the several sittings of which proved to me seasons of deep suffering, and I found no relief in them till the last sitting, which was closed, when I requested a pause might be made, after which I laid down my burden, and [expressed] the exercise I had passed through, which was deep suffering; the occasion of it I dare not conjecture, fearing to be found in the seat of judgment, but referred the judgment to each, to examine themselves, how far they had contributed to this distress which was now felt to cover the minds of the living amongst us. The meeting closed in a painful manner to me, feeling little or no relief. Next day in the meeting for worship, I had an open time to the youth, of whom there was a large number present, and the meeting ended comfortably. I then went to Mountmellick, and remained there nearly two weeks, attending the meetings in course, which felt to me to be low and exercising seasons, very little ability afforded to minister till the day I left it, when I was concerned in the week-day meeting, to express my sense of sundry states—some, in whom the precious seed of God's kingdom was covered with the clods of the earth, which prevented its growth—in others, the briars and thorns choked it—whilst some were soaring aloft, above the simplicity of Truth, and

entering into airy speculations concerning those things which can only be known by the revelation of the Father; it was by this revelation that Abraham saw Christ's day, and was glad, and the prophets saw it and foretold it; some were called to come down from the above state of self exaltation, by Him who is willing to enter in, and abide with them, if they will but obey His call. I left this place not altogether relieved from the burden I had to bear, being sensible how hard it is for the voice of the servant to be effectually heard by those who have not submitted themselves to the voice which has spoken, and is speaking from heaven.

24th of Eighth Month, I set out for Dublin, and after attending three meetings there, and our Quarterly Meeting near Charlemont, returned home. Since that time I have had very low poor times in and out of meetings, and sometimes under the necessity of ministering in some of them in little and low places; but I believe these dispensations are in that wisdom which is profitable to direct, that we may experience the few barley loaves to be sufficient.

Twelfth Month.—The Quarterly Meeting at Lurgan, was, I thought, at times favoured, and in some of the sittings my mind was comforted in feeling that Divine goodness was near to us, and acknowledged our assembly with a holy solemnity, in which

ability was afforded (I hope) to minister to several states present: the meeting concluded to satisfaction and the comfort of the living.

1813.—I have been greatly tried for these twelve-months, with a stripped state, and with various temptations, the subtle adversary being permitted to assault me in various shapes, and repeatedly to roar against me, and terrify me with inward and fearful impressions on my mind. But these trials turned to a good account for me, by drawing me to seek for help from Him on whom help is laid; and through gracious condescension, in the needful time, His Divine presence was manifested in my soul, His holy light dispelled the darkness and administered strength; so that in the frequent successions of these trials, strength was added to strength, holy confidence succeeded weakness, and I was hereby made measurably strong in the Lord, and by the power of His might enabled to rest in hope, that He who had been with me in many tribulations would never forsake me in my latter days: yet my faith was often closely tried. I attended the Yearly Meeting in Dublin this year, and had but little to offer in it, especially in the meetings for discipline, which to me were cloudy; I fear that the knowledge of the letter too much prevailed, which I believe casts a shadow over the brightness which otherwise would be seen, and in which alone

the discipline can be suitably and comfortably conducted.

I have at times felt my mind drawn to attend the meeting at Lisburn, to which I formerly belonged—in it my spirit has been baptized into a painful and trying state of poverty, and in the cross I have had to minister in this dry and barren state without feeling relieved. Oh! the love of the world, how overwhelming it is, and chokes the precious seed that the good Husbandman has sown in His field! Some now, as formerly, cannot bear sound doctrine, but would rather say to the servants, prophesy to us smooth things, prophesy deceits: but such physicians are of no value who would cry, Peace, peace, when there is no peace but what the world gives.

Twelfth Month 1st.—Many are and have been the trials and tribulations I have had to pass through, both in my public and private capacity. My afflictions are great, and I seem often left comfortless, and at seasons ready to conclude that I would no more speak in the name of the Lord, and have oftentimes gone to meeting with that resolution; but when the word of life has sprung up in my heart, I could not refrain, and words would almost burst from my lips; and though no condemnation would follow, yet constant poverty of spirit would be my covering, and mortifying recollections of my past life would impress my mind, and sink me into

great abasedness of soul, therein acknowledging my unworthiness and unfitness to take the great and holy name of my God in my lips : but to this state I submit, and bear it patiently, as I am made sensible it is truly my desert.

The Quarterly Meeting is now near, and it brings a considerable share of weight over my mind, as I do not know of any other minister likely to be present, and deep poverty is my attendant ; but to the great Head of the church I commit His family hereaway, and hope He will have compassion on them, and send them home satisfied that it was good that they were there.

The Quarterly Meeting is now ended, and it was well attended for the time of the year ; the meetings for worship were I think favoured, and I got through the service which presented to my peace and satisfaction. The first sitting of the meeting for discipline felt to me in danger of being disturbed, I thought Satan was present with us, and once or oftener shewed his head ; but the Lord was pleased to own us, and he was kept down, and a close exercise and watch prevailing, the business was concluded to satisfaction. The answer to the query ' how meetings are kept up ' brought an exercise over Friends, that a Committee was appointed (of which I was one) to attend all the Monthly Meetings, and assist them in making appointments to visit the deficient, and to stir them up to more diligence.

Third Month 7th, 1814.—The Quarterly Meeting at Lisburn: the meetings for discipline were low, Friends too generally are not sufficiently watchful over their own spirits, to keep them in obedience to Christ, in whom are all our fresh springs for service in the church. I have been for a long time kept very low in my mind, and in that state found myself drawn to minister, which has been in the cross, but I dared not neglect or refuse the opening. We are to offer the small cattle, as well as the large, when they are demanded of us—the former have been accepted at my hands.

I have been drawn to visit sundry week-day meetings in the province, and the fewness of the attendants brought discouragement over the prospect; but giving up to the small appearances in my mind, the service was often owned beyond my expectation, and I returned in peace. I generally am most easy not to make any unnecessary delay after a meeting is over, but return and eat my morsel in secret, and receive from my Master what He is pleased to grant, which is oftentimes an impressive sense of my own unworthiness, and under that impression I can render the praise to whom it is due.

Fourth Month.—I am now passing through baptisms preparatory to the Yearly Meeting in Dublin, which are deeply afflicting and hard to be borne. Excuses of age (nearly 75 years), and infirmities

are not felt to be sufficient for my absenting myself from it, neither a daily prevailing sense of unworthiness and unfitness to appear with the more enlightened children of the Lord; nothing affords peace but submission to the requirings of a Master who knows me, and what I can be made to endure. My exercise is so great that death seems to be preferable, and the day of my birth lamented that a man child was born into the world—woe is me! for many reasons! But the Lord knows my afflictions, and in His unutterable wisdom permits me to be thus tried, and by those who should not do it, which makes it harder to be borne.

Fifth Month.—I attended the Yearly Meeting in Dublin, which cost me a close exercise for some weeks, feeling considerable bodily as well as spiritual weakness; but I was enabled to give up and to trust for the renewal of strength both ways to Divine Mercy. I had some service in the meeting for discipline, and in a large evening meeting on First-day, to my satisfaction.

As I travelled home, my mind was much inwardly drawn, and in silence, a stream of Gospel ministry at times ran through me in secret, as if I were preaching to a large auditory, and the doctrine so apposite that it melted my heart into humble contrition and admiration, and I felt my strength renewed under the remembrance of this saying, “He

that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." I came home in peace, and glad that I had been there.

Ninth Month 6th.—Our Quarterly Meeting near Charlemont, the meetings on First-day were held in silence, and numerous attended, the meeting for discipline was favoured, and the next day I had an open testimony, to the members of our own Society as well as others, recommending them to the Divine Light in themselves as the door of the true sheep-fold of which Christ is the Shepherd; that unless they came in by that door, professing with us or any others was in vain.

11th.—First-day, at Megabry, a time of deep wading in silence, which was at length broken with these expressions, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me,"—"the devils believe and tremble." If we do not believe in Christ our faith stands upon the same grounds with theirs, and we lose the benefit of His second coming without sin unto salvation; and if we despise Him in His little and low appearance in our hearts, the Jews did so in his bodily appearance and were rejected of Him; and small as His appearance may be to the carnally wise and prudent of this generation, it was He whom the angels of God were commanded to worship.

Eleventh Month 2nd.—I have been now for some time reduced to a low state of mind, but pretty

much resigned under it ; my exercise in meetings is trying, feeling very little of that living virtue that encourages to act in the services of the church ; yet in this very low situation, I feel a necessity at times to offer the little that appears, which is attended with peace, but is again succeeded immediately by deep poverty, which is an exercising trial of faith and patience. I dare not desire a change of raiment, for in these tattered garments my nakedness is plainly seen, to the deep humbling of my poor mind : let all that is of the natural man be brought low, so that God be glorified through my abasement !

13th.—The Preparative Meeting at Megabry, in which my faith was closely tried, feeling a subject on my mind for a long time, but attended with so little ability to deliver it that I struggled much and long to pass it by ; but near the conclusion I felt strength to stand up, and was [enabled] to get through to my peace ; my usual dryness succeeded, and sunk my spirit into mourning, but I was mercifully supported by the arising of these words in my mind, “ Seek not to thyself great things, and thy life shall be given thee for a prey whithersoever thou goest,” which comforted me, as I have hitherto felt life to follow those weak appearances.

20th.—First-day, at Megabry ; a state of infidelity was the burden of my spirit, arising out of

those writings which are so plentifully scattered abroad in these days, leading the unwary astray, to follow after lying vanities and the deceivings of their own foolish hearts, thinking to comprehend the things of God by their own wisdom. I have felt this day much depressed in mind, from not giving up to attend the Monthly Meeting at Moyallen, yesterday ; the pointing thereto was so small, and my poverty so prevalent, that I passed it by, but I hope to be more attentive in future. The ways of God are at times unsearchable, and past our finding out. The Quarterly Meeting will be in about two weeks, which I expect will bring me into some preparatory baptisms, as is usually my lot before these large gatherings ; may the Lord strengthen my weakness, which is very great and has been for some time past, if it be His holy will !

Twelfth Month 6th.—Our Quarterly Meeting at Lurgan : in the concluding meeting I was enlarged in an open and clear testimony in defence of the Scriptures, and the Divinity of our blessed Lord, against a spirit of antichrist which seemed to possess some present ; and I concluded the meeting in supplicating the Lord that He would be pleased afresh to anoint the eyes of those who said they saw, but were blind, and to open their eyes that they might see the New Jerusalem, and the beauty of true holiness, so as to be able to worship God

aright through the Spirit of his beloved Son, who is God over all, blessed for ever and for evermore. The meeting concluded under a solemn covering, and I returned home in peace.

My movements in the ministry for some years back have been after long waiting, the appearance of life very small, and my faith closely tried, but a necessity has attended which I have been afraid to neglect; they have often been unexpectedly enlarged in Gospel love, and afforded peace: but very shortly the whole recollection of the precious unction has been clearly taken from me, and I have been reduced to my usual state of poverty—the gate [like Mordecai] has been my safe-guard, for there nothing can dress or perfume with the odours and ointments that had been poured forth when the Bridegroom had entered into His chamber. Blessed are the dead who thus die, yea, saith the Spirit, they shall rest from *their* labours, and their works shall follow them! Blessed poverty indeed, for in it the creaturely part has no share!

First Month 12th, 1815.—The Monthly Meeting near Ballinderry: the fore part of the meeting was a low time, my mind was much tried with a wandering spirit which I endeavoured to subject, and after some time experienced quiet; when that passage opened on my mind recommending the offering our bodies a living sacrifice, and I was gradually en-

larged, and led to compare the state I had been baptized into during the early part of the meeting to the waves of the sea, succeeding one another—that this was the work of the enemy to render our sacrifice unacceptable to God—but let us suffer the waves to pass over our heads, and not to carry us away into the world, and thereby [deprive] us of the opportunity of renewing our strength in Christ, who through His instruments appointed those seasons to His church and family for that gracious end and purpose. It was a time of refreshment and renewal of strength, for I went to meeting under deep exercise, not expecting or desiring to be so engaged, and under the feeling of life I was drawn forth in supplication at the close. The covering of the first meeting was carried into the meeting for discipline, which was conducted and concluded in a truly solemn manner; the praise is due to that all-wise and holy Being in whom “is life, and the life is the light of men,” and who has not forgotten to be gracious to a backsliding people!

In sitting in meetings for discipline, I look for as clear an evidence to speak as in meetings for worship, therefore my words are few, but I hope they are in degree seasoned with salt—“let your speech be alway with grace seasoned with salt,” which is the life—in this path the wayfaring man cannot err, and peace is found in his dwelling; it is a

means of keeping down those forward spirits which are ready to run when not sent, whose state is that of flatness and death instead of peace and consolation, and to whom the language applies, "Who hath required this at your hands?"

22nd. — First-day meeting at Megabry : Cast down, but I hope not forsaken. I have had deep trials of late that caused me to cry by night and by day, Lord help thy servant who cannot help himself ! but my cry returned back into my own bosom, as if the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth were not open to my cry. My sore ran in the night season, and I was not comforted. How long, Lord, wilt thou not hear my prayer and my supplication ! I feel dried up as a potsherd, but I still hold fast my confidence. Make haste, Lord, to help me, before I go hence and be seen of man no more, for there is neither wisdom nor knowledge in the grave !

Second Month 9th. — I attended the Preparative Meeting of Lisburn, and was concerned therein to exhort parents and heads of families to train up their children, both by precept and example, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, which would be as a twofold cord that might be a means of drawing them to the living principle of light and grace in their tender minds, and make therewith a threefold cord that could not be easily broken. Also recommending the children to obey their parents in the

Lord, for this is right; concluding with the state of Eli and his family, who did not restrain his sons, though he had counselled them against the evil of their ways.

Sixth Month 6th.—Our Quarterly Meeting at Moyallen, I had a pretty open time in both meetings on the First-day; the meeting for discipline was to me a remarkably clouded time, I was baptized in the cloud into death. As I lay in bed that night or early next morning, the spring of Gospel ministry opened and flowed in my heart abundantly, in such-a variety of doctrine as filled me with surprise, which gradually arose from a small beginning to a stream that I could swim in. I lay silent in spirit, and attended to the flowing of it to my admiration; towards morning it closed, and I arose in my usual poverty and went to meeting in a low and stripped state, but had not sat long before some little matter gradually arose before me, and as I attended on the opening it increased to the time I should stand up with a metaphor of Christ's school, in which He is the teacher: fresh matter gradually opening in my view I was enlarged in a clear testimony which afforded peace and comfort to my mind, the praise of which is only to be given to Him to whom alone it is due, the great and holy Head of His church, who is blessed for ever and ever!

CHAPTER VI.

1815. CONTINUATION OF THE JOURNAL OF HIS
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND SERVICES.

Ninth Month 10th.—I have not felt inclined of late to record any of the occurrences which attended me in my spiritual progress, which were various—some painful trials and probations, and many temptations, over which I was favoured to get with thanksgiving and praise where only it was due. I attended, as usual, all the meetings at home, and sometimes the neighbouring ones, some by appointment and others on my own concern, which were in general to my satisfaction. These services were at times attended with baptisms that brought to my recollection the state the apostle had to pass through when he said he was cast down, but not forsaken; in which times the promise of the Saviour was [fulfilled], “I will not leave you comfortless:” His poor depending children, who have none in heaven but Him, nor in all the earth in comparison of Him, give Him the praise of His own blessed work, for they experience Him to be the Resurrection and the Life; it is by and through Him alone they live,

and because He liveth they live. Our Quarterly Meeting was held last week in Grange, in Charlemont, which was large and favoured; I went in much discouragement as there was no other ministering Friend, and there were some disagreeable things to come before the meeting by an appeal, which at one time wore the appearance of a breach of love and unity; but I thought the Author of every good word and work did appear with healing in His wings. I felt a pointing to stay their week-day meeting next day, where were many young people, to whom I had to minister the word of consolation, and encouragement to purchase the Truth, let the price be what it may, for Divine wisdom and a right understanding seasoned with grace would be the companions of it; the opportunity was through Mercy remarkably favoured. I left them in peace, and returned home to sit *at the gate*, a safe dwelling place!

Tenth Month 25th.—I felt a draught to attend the Monthly Meeting near Charlemont, and was silent therein; in the second meeting, upon the clerk's querying if any Friend had anything to offer, I felt it right to say that I came there from an apprehension of duty, but in both meetings there was, I thought, such a thick cloud over me, I could not travel forward—that whatever was the cause I could not tell, but if each of us were so dis-

posed to inquire in sincerity, "Is it I?" I believe the individuals might find out who it was; but that if we abode under this covering, our stay in the wilderness would be prolonged, so that instead of advancing, we might be returning back again to our former conditions, and never reach the promised land. The clerk stood up, and said the Friend's concern was right, he believed, as there was occasion for the remark. My mind was relieved, and I returned in peace.

Eleventh Month 18th.—I had a closely-sifting season last night, which brought me very low, more so than I have felt for a long time; the sentence of death was my portion, and under it I was prostrated before the footstool, [of Mercy], scarcely daring to look up; when the Judge of quick and dead sits in judgment on us, who can stand when He appears! What must be the terrors of those whose sins accompany them to the [tribunal] of Christ, when their lot is cast for eternity, with a certain, fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation and wrath! In this furnace, I saw much still for the fire, and more for the fuller's soap, the prospect of which brought me very low, ready to give up all, under a [deep] sense of unworthiness; in which the Lord was exalted, whose right it is, and the creature abased: here I felt the truth of that saying of the Apostle, "Unto us belongeth shame and confusion of face."

Twelfth Month 14th.—My travel seems through the wilderness, and Pharaoh and his host pursuing me ; there is still a great deal in me to be slain ; when wilt thou be sheathed, oh ! sword of the Lord, the Word of His mouth ! Every word of my mouth appears to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, there is nothing escapes His eye, the inmost thoughts of my heart are judged as soon as conceived, there is not any thing hidden from Him ; in vain did Adam hide from that call, (which can shake the heavens and the earth also) “Where art thou ?” For some time past my hopes have been all centred in Divine mercy and forgiveness, my former works of righteousness have been blotted out, and in my heart I have said, “Though thou slay me, I will trust in thee.” In my troubles, I have endeavoured to remember the day of my espousals, when His light and His truth shone into my dark habitation ; I was then brought into His banqueting-house, and His banner over me was love ; but now I feel my enemy spreading snares to entrap me, but I trust the fear of falling will preserve me, through the mighty God of Jacob. Thy ways, oh ! Lord, are past our finding out,—but the advice of Moses formerly to Israel is good for me at this time, “Stand still, and see the salvation of God.” I have but little to add at this time, but to acknowledge the [Divine] mercy in supporting me with some patience under distressing trials in my family, but no way has opened for my

escape from them. I feel bound to this quarter of the vineyard, where my poor labours appear to be acceptable.

I felt a concern to attend the Monthly Meeting at Moyallen, and being desirous of turning the fleece upon it produced an exercise for two days, which was very trying, and when it had reduced me to resignation, the concern left me, and I remained at home in peace. When I feel drawings abroad, they are generally pleasant to the taste, but in turning the fleece they are bitter inwardly, and very hard to give up to. There is in man, though he has passed measurably through the fire, and drunk of the bitter waters of affliction, a share of the first nature still unsubdued, that would say, "Send by whom thou wilt send," or that complaint of, "Who hath believed our report?" Yet gracious, condescending Mercy bears with us as a tender parent, and rewards us (instead of chastising) with His evidence of peace!

Third Month 24th, 1816.—I went to Moyallen First-day meeting, and had a heavy dull sitting for above an hour and a half, when a very small opening appeared before me, a few words, which I reasoned with to put it by, when a language moved in my mind, that if we were so poor as not to be able to offer an ox, ram, or he-goat, a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons would be accepted. So I stood

up with two or three sentences, and moving gently on as a few more arose before me, the waters rose gradually, so that I left the meeting under a solemn covering, and myself in peace: let the praise be to Him to whom it is due, who is strength in weakness, and riches in poverty. The great necessity for watchfulness in ministers in exercising their gifts in meetings for worship has been shown to me lately. As I sat in meeting, a field of offerings opened before me, in which was much sound doctrine, on various subjects, which appeared to me suitable to many states and conditions who might be present; but as I rarely stand up till a considerable lapse of time, I viewed the subjects, whether they might be offered, when this language clearly came before my mind, that this ram had not *horns*,—the whole was resumed back into the treasury, and another ram was fastened in the thicket, and was offered, which I believe was accepted with wine and oil, and I had to conclude the meeting with solemn supplication to the Lord, who is Wonderful, Counsellor, and the Prince of Peace! Praise his holy name, O my soul, for He only is worthy of it.

This winter I had many bitter cups to drink, both outwardly and inwardly: we have need of patience—Lord, increase it, and my faith, that they fail not! I do not remember the furnace hotter, but I believe the cup is from the Lord's holy hand,

therefore I must drink it: the bitterest cup is sometimes the most wholesome, [therefore ye,] His poor despised little ones, drink ye all of it. The reply of Eli to the child Samuel, when he told him every whit, is instructive; when Eli heard the sad sentence pronounced against his house, he submitted, saying, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." A sorrowful and warning lesson to parents to exercise that authority over their families which faithful Abraham did in his, having this testimony of Divine approbation, that he *commanded* his family after him, therefore the Divine will was manifested unto him; and if we are sincerely engaged to do our part, help will be administered to us.

Seventh Month 10th.—The week-day meeting at Megabry was, I thought, comfortably held in silence; many doctrines opened in my mind in a living experience, which I thought I could have stood up with to edification, but the necessity or woe was not with them, therefore they passed away under this impression, that they might open again in some other meeting.

11th.—I attended the week-day meeting at Lisburn, much in the cross, as a hard time generally is my lot there; I sat in great poverty for upwards of an hour, when a very small opening appeared, with which I stood up, and gradually proceeding, it increased till it became as a broad river, when the

sense impressed the day before, of these openings being renewed in some other meeting, was fulfilled, I believe, to the satisfaction of many present, as well as to my own—praises be given to the Great Giver of every good and perfect gift! Watchfulness is as necessary to ministers as faithfulness, lest they enter into temptation.

14th.—[After speaking of a favoured meeting at Megabry, he says :]—It feels to me as if there were a fresh visitation afforded to this meeting, which was some years back highly favoured, as I have been told, and appears by the records of the Society; but when the elders of that day were removed, there arose a generation who had not been witnesses of the saving help which had been afforded to their fathers, and of some of them, it may be said, they knew the Lord only by hearing of His name and power, but their hearts were far from Him. Yet He whose mercy endureth from one generation to another, is pleased to visit the children's children, to the third and fourth generation of those who have loved Him and kept His commandments. May this blessed covenant of life and light be once more renewed in this quarter of the Lord's vineyard, [to the raising up of such] whose lips may be touched with the live coal from off the altar, under the holy influence whereof sons and daughters may in true dedication say, "Here am I, send me!" Though I do not

expect to see the morning of this day arise with healing virtue in its wings, yet I rejoice in the hope that it will come and will not tarry. Blessed and praised be the name (the power) of Israel's God, who can bind, and who can loose when in His unbounded wisdom, He sees meet so to do. Oh! may the blessing of the everlasting hills be upon the head of Joseph, upon the head of him who was separated from his brethren; may there be that fruitfulness in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, experienced in which the branches run over the wall, and there is a going to and fro in the earth proclaiming the glad tidings of the Gospel of peace and salvation, through obedience to the Divine illumination in their own minds.

Eighth Month 4th.—I have of late felt, as oftentimes before, when passing quietly about my lawful business, a spring of Gospel ministry open in my mind, and many Gospel doctrines flow therefrom for a considerable time in a clear and convincing manner; I have kept still, in humble admiration, desiring to treasure them up, in order to bring them out on some future occasion; but the whole has been resumed, and I have had to go forth without scrip or purse or two coats. To-day, after a favoured meeting, this state appeared to my mind as what is called in Scripture, "the renewings of the Holy Ghost." These experiences brightened my candle

which had been burning but dimly for some time past, and raised in my heart praises and thanksgivings to Him whose mercies are from everlasting, through His dear and beloved Son, our gracious and merciful Redeemer; who in His heavenly wisdom sees meet to hide Himself for a season, to increase our diligence in seeking for Him, and to Him for those fresh supplies which he graciously grants to His poor depending little ones, who in His absence mourn, but in His life-giving presence rejoice with fear and trembling. Amen, so be it.

25th.—First-day meeting. Before I left home my bitterness was so great that I went out shedding tears, almost careless what became of me, but I experimentally found that was not the case with my merciful Lord and Master. After I sat some time in meeting, the blessed state of the poor in spirit opened before me, with the benefits arising from it: from the feebleness of the impulse attending, I felt a fear of moving under it for near an hour, so that it left me, naked and bare, upon dry ground; but at my petition (on my uneasiness at having neglected a line of duty) unspeakable condescension, was pleased again to bring the opening into view with a little more certainty, upon which I moved forward, and Truth arose and its enemies were scattered—the light of the Gospel shone brighter through me than I had ever known before, and various states

and conditions were described—that the kingdom of heaven was only attainable through the aid of the grace of God, and submitting ourselves to the redeeming efficacy of the cross of Christ—the state of the poor in spirit, made so not in the will, wisdom or strivings of men, but through the wisdom of God shewing unto man his weakness and natural deformity, and the need he has of a Saviour lest he should die in alienation from God—and that it was this state of inward and deep poverty (to which I appeared to be well qualified to speak from my late baptisms into it) that effectually knocked at the door and gained an entrance, for the gates of heaven are opened to it, if faithfulness is continued in to the end. Let our oblations be ever so rich, and sacrifices ever so near and dear to us, even as a first-born, and though the temple we frequent be more magnificent than Solomon's, yet obedience to the revealed will of God in our hearts will be the only acceptable offering at our hands. The covering over the meeting was solemn, under which it broke up.

Ninth Month 15th.—My baptisms of late have been deep, and as much as I can bear up under, which causes strong and frequent cries, “Lord save me or I shall fall.” After all my trials I fear lest I should become a castaway—by night and by day my cries are to my dear Lord to have mercy on me, for

I feel ready to die, and can take no spiritual sustenance to support me. When will the Almighty arm be made bare for my deliverance? surely the Lord delayeth His coming! But oh! my soul, be not thou too much dismayed, for when He does come His reward is with Him. In my humiliation my judgment is taken away—I feel hedged in on every side. When oh Lord! wilt thou cause the light of thy countenance once more to shine upon me? These purging seasons are necessary; in one I passed through this morning every crown I might have been favoured with heretofore, was cast down at the footstool of the Lamb, who is alone worthy to be honoured and obeyed: I cast myself and all that I have into the arms of His everlasting mercy, which endureth from one generation to another. I have not felt so deep a plunging I think for years, which I suppose was necessary to do away more of the dross still behind. Oh! the wormwood and the gall, how bitter is this cup to drink of—this is a partaking of a measure of Christ's sufferings spiritually, that our life may be hid with Christ in God, and when He who is the Resurrection and the Life shall arise, these shall arise with Him, and be made partakers of His life. Praises and thanksgivings to Him who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever.

26th.—I felt drawings on my mind to attend

the week-day meeting in Lisburn, which was very much in the cross, even to tears. I had to deal in a very close manner on the power of the cross, and the blessed effects derived from obedience to it; with a caution against Delilah, and reposing in her lap, and to take warning by Samson, who was a Nazarite from his birth, yet he lost his strength and his light, and became a bondman to the uncircumcised, and was bound in fetters of brass—spiritualizing it. It was an open time, and a solemn covering was spread over the meeting.

30th.—My exercises are many, and deeply distressing on account of the state of my son's affairs, with the poor prospect his small family has of a livelihood; my own state also being a stripped one, leads me oftentimes to call upon Divine Mercy, that He would be pleased to afford but one ray of light to shew me where I am, if I am still in the land of the living. My sore runs in the night season, and occasions me many sleepless hours, meditating an escape from this furnace, and to pitch my tent in some other place. Such thoughts occupied me early this morning in bed, when these expressions impressed my mind in a solid manner, and entirely laid aside my meditated removal elsewhere,—“Thou art a fruit-bearing branch, thou must abide in the Vine, or thou canst not bring forth fruit;” by which I understood that if I re-

moved in my own will or desire I might become fruitless, and be as a useless branch broken off and cast away. A lesson of sound instruction, may I never forget the awful effect it produced in me.

Twelfth Month 2nd.—The Quarterly Meeting at Lurgan, which was attended by our dear friends Hannah Field and Elizabeth Barker, from North America, whose company and Gospel labours were truly satisfactory: I think the meeting was comfortable, and the business conducted with harmony.

Second Month 2nd, 1817.—I attended the meeting at Moyallen, where after a deep travail I was opened on the new birth, from the state of the babe whose food is proportioned to its weakness, the pure milk of the Divine Word—its progress to the state of the young man—then to manhood, enabled to resist the devil—then to that of an elder who becomes a pillar in the church, able to bear up and support a share of the building—and the next translation would be to heaven and happiness, there to receive the fulness of the answer of “Well done,” &c. It was a time of favour, and brought me the comfortable evidence of peace: there was a person present lately received into membership, for whose encouragement and strengthening I believed I was thus drawn forth.

6th.—I attended the Preparative Meeting in Lisburn by appointment, in it those deistical prin-

ciples so prevalent were closely spoken to and resisted on the clear evidence of Scripture, with the danger of dying in a denial of Christ before men, and the awful consequences thereof. I had to trace the enemy's delusions and various transformations from Adam, in sundry generations of mankind, describing their appearances, and that he still is the unwearied enemy, and is now attacking the Divine light from heaven, desiring to gain proselytes to the opinion that it proceeds altogether from man, as a portion of his reason, and not from Christ in us the hope of glory. It was an exercising time to my mind, but left the evidence of peace.

I am now in the 78th year of my age, and am mercifully favoured with health and ability to attend meetings at home, and sometimes abroad: when the time comes that the account must be rendered, may it be with joy and not with grief, striving to do whatsoever is commanded to be done.

Third Month 4th.—Our Quarterly Meeting in Lisburn, my previous preparation for it was great discouragement and poverty of spirit, which led me secretly to desire that some other ministering Friend might be sent to it to relieve my distress, but none came. In the First-day forenoon meeting I had a little relief, but it was a poor low time, and the afternoon meeting was held in silence. I had a relieving share in the service of the meetings for

business, and in the parting meeting had an open time, being enlarged to several states, and concluded in supplication. Since that time I have had several deep and purging seasons that I have almost been ready to surrender my crown and to say, "Send by whom thou wilt send;" but a small portion of faith and patience being afforded, I was made willing to travel on through heights and through depths, and put my whole trust and confidence in that arm of Divine support which has hitherto sustained me through many trials and probations: to Him is the praise, but to me shame and confusion of face!

12th.—For some time past I felt drawings to attend the week-day meeting in Lurgan, and after some reasonings respecting the smallness of it I went, and found it very small; yet there were those in it who I believed were under religious exercise and close trials, to whom I had to hand forth encouragement to persevere and wrestle for the blessing as Jacob did, that they might prevail with God, and then their light would shine forth with brightness, which would enable them also to prevail with men, so as to acknowledge that God was in them of a truth—that they had many trials of their faith to pass through, but I urged them not to be discouraged, for all the stones which compose the spiritual building, Christ's church here on earth, are tried ones, and are in this manner brought into

their places in that body of which Christ Himself is the holy Head and High Priest. I believe my concern was on account of this class, and it afforded me peace on my return.

To record the many baptisms I have to pass through, and painful exercises which I believe are the experience of all Christian travellers (in that way which the vulture's eye hath not seen) is not my intention; the wind bloweth where and when it listeth, we hear the sound thereof, but know not whence it cometh; therefore such must be contented to bear the blasts of it without considering much about the cause: this is very much the course I travel in. I felt drawings to attend Belfast meeting this day two weeks, which from my weakness at the time, with some other discouragements, made it hard to give up to, but I was secretly helped through, and had a time of favour and much enlargement in both meetings, and openness in sundry families, stopping there nearly three days. Since then my borders have been narrowed, and I rest satisfied, hoping I feel myself at times under the shadow of His holy wing, in which I find great delight; though at others some withering blasts are felt, for which I hope I am thankful. A change of seasons in the natural world is pleasant, the spring coming on after the winter, with the singing of the birds is cheering; so are the secret touches of

Divine love succeeding the cold blasts of winter, strengthening and refreshing to the traveller, encouraging him to hold on his way without fainting or growing weary. This is part of that hidden mystery which the world by wisdom knoweth not of, neither can it, as experience only can teach it; by this the wayfaring man (though a fool as to worldly wisdom) hath found it, and walks therein, whilst the worldly wise count his life as madness, and that his end will be without honour. Unsearchable, Oh Lord! are all thy ways, and past our finding out any other way but by submission to thy holy will. We have girded ourselves heretofore, and went whithersoever we would, but the time is now come to me when another girds me and carries me sometimes whither I would not, but I believe in that wisdom to which I cannot add anything. It is now become as my meat and drink, *upon which I live*, to look inward for secret help and direction in all my goings, that I may be enabled to walk without reproach from my own conscience or from men.

Ninth Month.—I attended the Quarterly Meeting at Grange, near Charlemont, and next day the week-day meeting at Moyallen, which was satisfactory; after which I returned home, and found the sheriff had that day sold by auction almost the whole of my son's crop, but my share of property was untouched. I was made acquainted with it

just before meeting, which brought me to a stand whether to go to meeting, or home to attend the auction and claim what things I had a right to. I staid meeting, and left my affairs to Divine disposal, and I did not lose anything, though I was told there were some greedily wanting to have my hay sold, as I was not there to advance the money if it were ; but a stranger came forward and offered to advance the money for me till my return: thus was I preserved from loss !

[It appears that John Conran went through much trial in his son's family, with whom he had resided after his marriage in 1807 ; and in 1813, he writes] :—my situation here has been very dissatisfactory, but I have thought these trials were permitted for my refinement, and though I have very often prayed and entreated that I might be favoured to see some other situation to retire to, yet at present I cannot, but have still to suffer most afflicting seasons. May God not lay it to their charge, for they know not what they do !

Eleventh Month 16th.—Many have been my trials and deep exercises of late, both inwardly and outwardly, that I have often secretly prayed that my faith fail not ; but an invisible Hand supported me, and kept my head above the waters, when the successive waves appeared likely to overwhelm me. I feel bound to this meeting, so that I cannot find an

open door to go out and leave it ; and though my labours are frequent among its members, the dry bones in the open valley will rise up in judgment against them and condemn them, for *they* showed signs of life, and rose up when the prophet prophesied upon them ; but here there does not appear any marks of resurrection, the earth keeps its place, not showing any symptoms of being moved out of its place in their hearts, which makes the labour harder to the poor storm-beaten traveller, who at times can scarcely find a path through the wilderness, which leads to peace. This day the excellency of the Scriptures was spoken to and acknowledged, but the more excellent way was preferred, that [Word of life and light] which gave them forth—that they were oftentimes my study, and administered comfort and consolation in comparing my exercises and temptations with those which are there recorded ; yet although my memory would serve me to repeat the whole of them, and to preach therefrom the doctrines they contained, if it were not mixed with true faith proceeding from my having tasted, felt, and handled the pure Word of life and light which gave them forth, my preaching would not profit the hearers, or afford peace to myself. Some in this day search them, and think in so doing they shall have eternal life ; but though they testify of Christ, yet of themselves they do not give life. Apollos, in

the beginning of his ministry, was mighty in the Scriptures, and from them preached Christ boldly, not fearing the opposers in that day; but when the two well-instructed elders heard him so powerful in the letter, they took him under their pruning hand, and taught him the way of God more perfectly, and then he became a fellow-labourer with the Apostle, and what the latter planted, Apollos watered, and God alone gave the increase.

Seventh Month 9th, 1818.—Feeling a small draught towards the week-day meeting at Hillsborough, I thought it safest to give up, though attended with a discouraging poverty. I sat down in that state, but was rather surprised at my feelings, which were covered with great stillness, that I thought I had got into a quiet habitation from the enemy, who on these occasions often endeavours to stir up in me wandering thoughts. All was silent, when there arose before me not only doctrines instructive to the Christian traveller, but encouragement also to persevere in that way that I believe Truth, by its Divine light, had cast up before the mind, and was inviting to walk in. I waited on these openings, as they moved on my mind, upwards of an hour, desiring a clearer evidence to express them, which not being afforded, I was submitting to retain them for some other season, and now to keep silence; when this intimation touched my mind, that Shiloh's waters

run softly, which had the healing effect to strengthen my feeble knees, so that I stood up, and proceeding quietly on by little and little, as it was afforded me, they gradually increased to a pretty full stream of comfort and consolation to my own poor state, and I hope also to the minds of some others, the savour of which remained with me, and the next day also, relieving me from that state of desertion which is very often my experience. Thy ways, oh Lord! with the children of men, are wonderful, and past human wisdom to find out; the stork knoweth its way in the heavens, because it is instructed by thee, but man, by refusing Divine instruction, knoweth not his way, it is past his finding out.

I am now in the 79th year of my age, and I believe I may say I feel my watchfulness increased, having to examine carefully almost every word or sentence I make use of, lest by any means I should miss of so great salvation which has been offered to me in the discovering light of Christ. Oh! ye careless ones, and lukewarm professors of the blessed Truth, who have neglected your day's work in the day of God's mercy to your souls, and are spending your money (or talent) upon that which doth not profit, what will ye do when the end comes, and the talent is called for with usury?

20th.—Our family was broken up in Tromra; my daughter-in-law, with the children, went to her

father's, and in a few days after, I went to Belfast, to J. B.'s, and staid there till about the 26th of Ninth Month. My abode there was pleasant; I had some open and satisfactory opportunities in their meeting, the recollection of which has been consolatory to my feelings.

Twelfth Month 23rd.—I felt my mind drawn to attend the Monthly Meeting at Grange, (County of Tyrone), feeling a sympathy with the suffering seed in that place; the privileges of Christ's sheep were shown forth, not the least of which was that of being enabled to distinguish His voice from that of the stranger, which they will not follow because he is a stranger—Christ leads His sheep at times into green pastures, and by the still waters, causes them to drink of Shiloh's brook that runs softly, brings them down to the washing pool, and up again, bearing twins, a meek and quiet spirit and love to God and their neighbour. When I sat down a restless spirit, (one who had been disowned) stood up and preached against the old prophet, but it was to me as a sounding brass, being void of that charity which thinketh no evil, but rejoiceth in the good in whomsoever it appeareth: my services in both meetings were I believe acceptable to some and brought peace to my own mind.

25th.—This morning early, I was deeply humbled with a sharp attack of the enemy, lest I should be

exalted or assume any glory to myself, which justly belonged to my gracious Lord and Master: shame and confusion of face was my portion. After breakfast, in my usual retirement in my chamber, I was mercifully comforted with a fresh instance of Divine regard flowing into my soul, which healed my wounded spirit, shewing to me that He can wound, and that He also can heal, blessed and praised be His almighty and holy name, now and for ever. Amen!

[Frequent mention is made in his memoranda of these seasons of *daily* inward waiting on the Lord, they often extended to the space of two hours, and were made to him times of deep instruction, or inward refreshment, or as he himself expresses it, occasions in which he experienced something of what the apostle describes as "the renewings of the Holy Ghost." The Editor, while selecting from these private memorials, has been impressed with the excellence of John Conran's example in this respect, and can hardly forbear expressing the desire that it may be more generally followed; for while the leisure of many might not admit of such lengthened abstraction from their daily avocations, none it is believed, would be permitted to go unrewarded for dedicating such a portion of time, as they could rightly spare from their temporal duties,

to seeking for that soul-sustaining food without which, the spiritual life must languish and decay—needful alike for all, but especially important for those who feel themselves called upon like John Conran to become leaders and teachers of the people.]

Second Month, 1819.—I have had a wilderness travail for some weeks, having passed through some bitter baptisms in secret, but my only consolation is that the Lord can deliver out of them all; though the fire of temptation is permitted to burn, it is He only who can quench the fiery darts of the wicked one. I go mourning on my way daily, looking for Him whom my soul loveth, but find Him not. How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thyself? for in thy holy presence there used to be joy, and with thee is peace for evermore.

17th.—Attended the Monthly Meeting at Lisburn, and had the company of Benjamin White from Pennsylvania, and John Pim from London, the former was largely engaged in gospel labour, I sat very much in my usual manner, little and low.

CHAPTER VII.

1819. HE BECOMES A MEMBER OF LURGAN MONTHLY MEETING — RELIGIOUS EXERCISES — ACCOMPANIES JOHN KIRKHAM AND VISITS THE FAMILIES WITH HIM IN DUBLIN — CONTINUATION OF HIS EXERCISES AND SERVICES.

Third Month 22nd.—I am now removed by certificate into the bounds of the Monthly Meeting of Lurgan, and am settled in Moyallen in the family of my friend T. C. W., which feels to my satisfaction. It was in the meeting of Lurgan, I first felt the principle of life and light which manifested to me my lost state and condition, and caused me to cry secretly for “a Saviour or I die, a Redeemer or I perish,”—and it was in the meeting of Lurgan that my mouth was opened the first time in a public testimony, for the Truth. The present state of this Monthly Meeting feels to me very discouraging—the Aarons and Hurs are very few—their meetings for discipline composed of about eight or nine men—and a spirit gone forth that has laid waste some families that were once valiant for the Truth, whose influence has operated like the tail of the serpent

to draw many down after them; the spirit of anti-christ is to be felt at times denying the Son to be of the Father in that fulness which He declared of Himself—a depressing prospect for me, but no other appeared to open before me, and I was shut out of my two former habitations. Yesterday I stood up in meeting here with an opening on the necessity of having a true and living faith in God through the manifestations of the Divine Light, which is Christ, and though in my silent sitting, clear doctrine had opened to my view on that subject, I said but a few passages, when I felt a spirit of opposition and resistance, and sat down under my burden, sorrowful on their account.

Fifth Month 3rd.—I returned from the Yearly Meeting in Dublin, which was large, our friend Benjamin White, was frequently and largely concerned in the meetings, and his companion John Pim. I was often in silence, being rather a burden-bearer than a testimony-bearer, but I hope was sometimes suitably opened into some of the states of the church. In the Select Meeting I had to exhort the members, as my fellow-labourers in the gospel, to stand plumb upon the living Foundation, for if a pillar leaned to any side it shewed weakness, or a disposition to slide off the foundation; if *that* should happen, the pillar will be of no farther use in the house, but must be cast out. There were

two members of that meeting, soon after removed from their stations.

My offerings in meetings, though pretty frequent, yet are very short, sometimes only a few sentences, but they often bring with them a solemnity and peace to my own mind. Other dear Friends, with whom I am sometimes their companion in travail, can launch out into the deep, whilst I can only keep near the shore with very little sail; if it were not for the evidence of life attending the morsel, I should be ready to conclude I had lost ground, not comprehending the cause, and this language is sometimes uttered under great depression of spirit, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" My inward exercises are very great indeed—contend not, I beseech it of thee, with thy judgments in my soul, for what am I before thee? but a worm, unworthy of the least of thy mercies! Oh! Mercy, that I am not consumed, for I am hateful in my own sight; how, then, must I appear in thy most holy and most pure sight, when the very heavens are not clean before thee? Then, oh Lord! do I cast down every high thought and imagination of myself, and sit in the dust at thy footstool, and there desire to receive the law from thy mouth. Thy judgments sink deep in my soul; when thou visits the people with them, they will learn righteousness, and I fear not till then. Many

in this meeting having strayed from thy fold, and some of them into a far country, from whence they may never find their return, unless thou art pleased in mercy to stretch forth the shepherd's crook of thy love, and draw them.

Seventh Month 8th.—Week-day meeting at Moyallen, a small company. I felt a concern to rest on my mind to show the loving mercies of God to mankind, and how unwilling He is that any should be lost to that great salvation that He hath prepared before the face of all men, to whom, for this gracious end and purpose, He hath given a portion of His own blessed Spirit, which, when they will not obey, He sends His servants, rising up and sending them. And He hath also given to us other tokens to warn us of His coming to judgment, the gradual decay of our bodies, natural faculties, and intellects; even these are often not sufficient to awaken us to a feeling so as to prepare us for our Lord's coming. Ephraim, we read, had grey hairs upon him, yet he knew it not—also other states which that favoured tribe was in, which prevented him from lending his ear to the instructing voice of God. My concern was warm for some present, and I had to express that the door was still open, that they might enter in, and find bread to eat, and raiment to put on, that would cover their nakedness; but if the Master of the house should rise up and shut to the

doctr, that they might knock and not get entrance, for His declaration is that His Spirit shall not always strive with man. If we let the day pass over our heads, and the night overtake us, we may then grope for the wall, and not be able to find that whereon we can rest, and I believed this might be the last call before the command goes forth to "let Ephraim alone,"—desiring that no one might say this is not for me, and shift, if they can, the weight from themselves to others; but turn to the Light, and as the disciples did formerly ask, "Lord, is it I?" and the right one will feel this answer, "Thou hast said it."

Eighth Month.—I accompanied my friend, John Kirkham, from Essex to the following meetings, viz., Lurgan, Lisburn, Hillsborough, Belfast, Moyallen, and Richhill, in all of which his service was considerable, and mine very small, having been kept little and low for some time; but it is the Lord's doing, and I am resigned to it; He gave, and He hath taken away, blessed be His holy name.

[In the Tenth and Eleventh Months, he visited the families of Friends in Dublin, with John Kirkham, upon which he remarks]: "Though I had the concern for some years on my mind, at times very strongly, yet I believe the right time was mercifully pointed out, and this I acknowledge with secret thanksgiving to Him whose counsel is wisdom, and

His own works do praise Him. I entered the families greatly stripped, but in my silent waiting on that Fountain which never can be drawn dry, I was favoured gradually to feel light to arise out of darkness, and by following it I was enabled to minister sometimes in little and low places, and at other times more plentifully, to my own peace, and I hope to the edification of others. In two meetings I was favoured to unburden my mind in a full testimony against that prevailing and dangerous principle of infidelity which I fear has taken root in some minds amongst us, but it is to be feared more deeply among the people at large. I was silent in thirty-three meetings, but at times the gift operated on me in silent tears, to my comfort, peace, and resignation; I believe it was good for me that I was there, and am thankful for the [Divine] aid in helping me to go forth under my varied exercises; the praise is due, not to me in any wise, but to the all-wise and good Helper of those whose only reliance is upon His Divine support. I returned home with peace, but it was succeeded by a trying state of poverty in our own meeting, and when apprehending myself required to express anything in meeting, had to do it with a stammering tongue and faltering lips, and to close with very few words, very little being committed to me; but I abide with the little, and endeavour patiently to submit to the present

dispensation, though at times these expressions escape my lips, "Hast thou forsaken me?"

Second Month 17th, 1820.—I attended the Monthly Meeting in Lisburn, which was large, but a low, heavy, wading meeting; I was held in silence, not feeling any thing but great poverty, which is generally my experience in that meeting; the world is the cloud that overshadows the tabernacle, by which the Sun of Righteousness is obscured. When, oh Lord! wilt thou arise, for thy great name's sake, and dispel these mists, that the people may see where their help is laid! The gods of silver and of gold are the works of men's hands, but the work of righteousness is thine, and brings peace, quietness, and assurance, and that for evermore!

24th.—At the Monthly Meeting in Richhill, I was a long time in silence: when I stood up, I said to this effect, that were I to express my feelings at this time, I should say I apprehend myself to be led into the valley among the dry bones, and that they were very dry; but I felt the caution of the prophet to possess my mind, when he was asked if those bones could live; he did not rashly enter into judgment upon his brethren, but referred the judgment to the Judge of quick and dead, saying, "Lord, thou knowest."—Neither did I, remembering that He who raised Lazarus from the dead, could raise up an army from the dry bones who should

stand for His blessed name's sake. And though the state of things may now be very low among them, yet I believed there was a remnant present, who should be encouraged to persevere and hold on their way, and use the little strength they had, and that it would be increased, if faithfulness were abode in.

Third Month.—The Quarterly Meeting in Lisburn, to me, was but a low time; after it, I went to Belfast, and sat in their week-day meeting, and two meetings on the First-day, which were satisfactory. If the few there keep faithful to what is already made known, the little will be increased, and they will be made as way-marks to others; for I believe there is a right seed sown in that place, which is vegetating, and will in the Lord's time show itself green above the earth, which now covers it from outward view. I feel that love towards it that is stronger than death, and it will prevail.

26th, First-day.—After reading the Scriptures in the evening, we had a season of solemn silence, in which I felt my mind concerned to express the benefits derived to us under the Gospel dispensation, in which our lots are cast in this day—that there is not now any occasion for one man to say unto another, or to a brother, “Know the Lord;” for all may know Him, from the least to the greatest—neither need we say one to another, “Who shall

go up to heaven, or to the furthestmost parts of the earth, to bring Christ from thence, that we may hear Him and obey Him ;” for He, the Word, is near to each of us, in the heart and in the mind, telling each of us the way, and to walk in it—that though the Scriptures are the words of God, yet Christ is *the Word* that was before the Scriptures—that all things were made by Him, and that when He, the First-born, came into the world, the angels of God were commanded to worship Him—that He is the Light of the world—that a measure and manifestation of this Divine illumination is given to every one to profit withal, which if we follow in the way of its leadings, will lead us in the straight and narrow way, which ends in eternal life. We are all candidates for this glorious end, and the voice of Divine mercy has gone forth throughout the earth, inviting us to come to this Light, which is Christ ; and what by nature we cannot do, His holy Spirit will enable us to do, if faithfulness is abode in, and He will save us with an everlasting salvation, which the works of the law could not accomplish. My mind was principally drawn to the servants, five of whom were present, and one of them had been clerk to a public worship house ; the opportunity closed under a solemn covering.

Fifth Month 9th.—I came home last evening from the Yearly Meeting in Dublin, our dear friend, S. G.,

with his companion, W. Allen, were there, and had considerable service in the meetings, and a paper recounting some of their travels in foreign parts was read, which, with some verbal communications from S. G., were truly gratifying, and instructive to put our trust and confidence in the Divine counsel, and not to fear what man can do. I was in silence in all the public meetings, but returned in peace, and was satisfied I was there.

18th.—I felt my mind drawn to the Monthly Meeting at Lisburn, which I attended, also the Meeting of Ministers and Elders, where, in reference to a deficiency in bringing families to meeting, I remarked that the authority which parents had given them by the Great Parent of the family should be maintained, as the patriarchs were kings and priests in their families, and reminded them how the centurion was praised for supporting his authority in his family. The succeeding meeting was very low, and I sat a long time much depressed, when I had to say that the foundation of true Gospel ministry was love—that God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son into it—that He, the Minister of ministers, preached to the people love to God above all, and love to our neighbour—that his church was built without hands, and did not need the support of men's hands—that whoever ministered in it should remember the

advice of the apostle, to minister in that ability which God giveth—that if any ministered out of this ability, their foundation is comparable to hay, straw, &c., and will be consumed, as God is said to be a consuming fire; and as He is also said to be jealous, His glory He will not give to man, nor His praise to the works of men, for His own works do praise Him, and if any one should take that honour to themselves, they will lie down in sorrow.

Eighth Month 9th.—A meeting was appointed at Moyallen for Charles Parker, of Yealand, and Daniel Oliver, of Newcastle, and the next day one at Lurgan, which I attended; they were both low times. In the latter, I had to remind Friends of the prize that is set before them, a crown of glory eternal in the heavens; but if we do not run we shall not obtain—if we stand still, we shall be found in the same spot at the end of the race. “So run, that ye may obtain.”

11th.—This morning as I lay awake before day, I felt a flow of Gospel truths to break forth in my mind—attended with life, shewing the necessity of experiencing the new birth brought forth in us; till that is the case, let our profession of religion be what it may, or our name be ever so high, we are in the Gentile nature, and our worship is in the outer court. This felt to me at the time so clear, that I thought nothing could gainsay it, nevertheless if

the blind eye is not Divinely opened, it cannot see into this mystery. God made a covenant with Israel at Sinai, which covenant they did not keep ; He has made a covenant in these latter days by writing His law in the heart, and in the mind, and those who break this covenant and will not keep it are not the Lord's people, nor is He their God, as they do not worship him. These truths were sealed on my mind, and as things new and old are brought out of the scribe's treasury, so in the newness of life they may be brought forth to the edification of some. Blessed are the eyes which see these things and have faith given to believe them, they shall no longer wander in darkness, but shall have the light of life. My spirit was deeply bowed with thankfulness, and peace was the covering of it.

Ninth Month 2nd.—The Quarterly Meeting in Grange, was very large, supposed to be above 600 persons. Charles Parker and companion were there ; I may say I was thankful to be present, although I was in a stripped state, and wearied in body with my journey from Belfast. The close of the meeting for discipline was comfortable, I was drawn forth in supplication, that the little remnant who had toiled and laboured all the night, might be favoured to return to their habitations, with a portion of that bread which had been broken among us, by Him who feedeth the young ravens, and those

who sincerely ask it from Him—that they and their families might rejoice together, in thanksgiving and praise, to Him who only is worthy, now and for evermore! I had a desire to see the Friends of that particular meeting, next day, in their week-day meeting, which they very fully attended, and I was concerned to deal closely with them, for their general neglect of this reasonable service, telling them that I felt the Divine jealousy raised, so as almost to close me from any communication at that time, which was the reason I was held so long in silence—because the servant's invitation had been more attended to than that of the Master, who had so often invited, not only by His holy Spirit in their hearts, but also by His servants—that we called Him Master and Lord, but did not honour and obey Him as such, nor yet confess Him before men as we ought to do, &c. I returned home in the evening, with a sheaf in my bosom.

17th.—I attended the meeting at Richhill, and a public one by desire of Nathan Hunt, from North Carolina, who was largely engaged in testimony therein, to the exalting of our principles, and addressing himself to many states present, I believe, very suitably; and although occupied at home in a laborious line, to maintain himself and family, being a blacksmith, nevertheless he had the tongue of a scribe well instructed, bringing things new and old

out of his treasury, and was as a polished shaft in his Master's quiver, wounding and bringing down the hairy scalp of his enemies. I felt myself so small and little, that I durst not venture to my tent door, even to look after this man of God, as he entered into the tabernacle !

Tenth Month 1st.—First-day, I am now returned from meeting, where I have been practically instructed that I am little and low, and of no account in my own eyes, and perhaps in the eyes of others also ; the life seems to be much veiled in me, yet I feel a necessity to move with the little, and to be content therewith ; this has been my lot for a long time in this meeting, but when the great Shepherd shall appear, we may hope to appear with Him. I have been now for a considerable time closely beset, especially in the night-season, by the enemy who is permitted to assault me, and I have cried most earnestly for help, which has been mercifully afforded, when my strength failed. If those who are acquainted with the Source of help, are scarcely saved from the jaws of the devourer, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear !

19th.—Week-day meeting here, after a long time in silence the [subject of the] ten lepers who were cleansed was opened before me—only one returned to give God thanks, and he was a stranger, not of the house of Israel, where were the nine ? strangers

will be called in to sit at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, while the children of the kingdom shall be cast out; for the time may not be far distant when many, who have not been favoured as we have, with one servant after another being sent with their lives in their hands, to invite, saying, "Behold all things are ready, come ye and eat at the Lord's table," whilst we are making excuses, forgetful of His mercies—I say these strangers will come to the light, flocking like doves to the windows, and will fill up our vacant seats, for His table shall be filled, and the children of the bridechamber be cast out, if they will not hear. When the Divine light first shone into my heart, I was a stranger also, but I immediately cleaved to it, and surrendered my body, soul, and spirit to it, willing to give all up to be possessed of this precious pearl; and I have been mercifully preserved in the love of it to this day, now about eighty-one years of age; praise the Lord, O my soul, for His mercy endureth for ever, to those who love and fear him.

Twelfth Month.—At the Quarterly Meeting at Lurgan, we had the company of Huldah Sears from Virginia, who had large service; I was shut up in the several sittings, but the last, on Third-day, when I was enlarged in comparing the shadows of the law, with the substance revealed in the Gospel.

In the meeting for discipline, the answers from the several Monthly Meetings, shewing a considerable deficiency in the attendance of week-day meetings, brought a deep exercise over us for some time, and a consideration arose, what could be done to endeavour to apply some remedy to this complaint, uttered in every meeting for discipline. After a time of retirement, it opened in my mind to propose the appointment of a committee, to pay a visit to the several Preparative Meetings, and to endeavour to stir up Friends to this reasonable and necessary duty, so much complained of as neglected; which was agreed to, and a committee appointed, who performed the visit, I believe, to general satisfaction, in the next month.

First Month, 1821.—There feels to me, a disposition in some here, wanting to comprehend the hidden mysteries of God, and to measure them by their natural understandings; to this spirit I have sometimes to minister, but my labour seems in vain, it must be brought to the Master Himself if cast out. On First-day, I had to compare the natural man to the world, in its primitive state as described by Moses, void and without form, and darkness upon the face of the deep, until the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters—"and God said, Let there be light, and there was light, and God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from

the darkness, the light He called day, and the darkness He called night"—man, as born of a woman, is void of Divine knowledge of heavenly mysteries, but endowed with a knowledge of the things necessary for man, called "the things of a man;" with this knowledge man generally turns the strength of his mind and faculties to the obtaining of earthly things; but the Spirit of God, moving upon this state, says in His own time, "Let there be light,"—and in that light, man then discovers his state of nature, and feels he is unable [of himself] to do those things, which the secret counsel of the Most High shews him in his conscience, are necessary to be done, if he attains to heaven and happiness. The light then is gradually separated from the darkness, and the light is called the day of merciful visitation to the benighted soul of man; and though this light appears in man, it is not of man, but from God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, man should give up his own wisdom in these things, and wait daily at Wisdom's gate, for that wisdom which alone can explain those mysteries, which were hidden from ages, and are now revealed in the second coming of Jesus Christ, [in Spirit], in whom is all wisdom and knowledge, and who is blessed now and for evermore!

10th.—As I sat in my usual retirement this forenoon, a stripped state was my companion, neverthe-

less I endeavoured to travel on, remembering Jacob wrestled through the night season ; under this state of conflict this language feelingly impressed my mind, " Mordecai returned to the king's gate ;" which comforted me, and begot in me thanksgiving and praise, that my then state was opened to me, and I journeyed on with renewal of strength, praising God whose mercy endureth for ever.

My baptisms are frequent, by day and by night, especially in the silence of the latter, though deeply exercising, deep answering to deep in holy writ, yet they are productive of secret prayer for preservation from the roaring lion, seeking to devour ; the hand which was stretched forth to save Peter, is stretched forth in due time, when every other help fails, His saving grace is found sufficient, and my little grain of faith is increased, to confess, ' Thou art the Son of the everlasting Father, thou art the Saviour of all who put their trust in thee !' I have been favoured with precious seasons in the night sometimes, when I have felt the inflowings of Divine good to my soul, bringing the whole man into solemn silence, and covering me with heavenly light ; under this I have lain secretly praying for preservation, and acknowledging I was but dust and ashes. These seasons I compared to the brook by the way which refreshed after the close exercises and baptisms I had passed through, and increased my faith

to say, ' Lord thou hast been my Alpha, condescend I beseech thee to be my Omega, now in the 82nd year of my age, that when thou in thy unerring wisdom seest meet to call me from works to rewards, I may be enabled to say, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth, and is waiting thy coming. Praises be to thy holy and blessed name who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.'

Fourth Month 1st.—First-day meeting at Moyallen : near the time of separating, a concern ripened so as to encourage me to stand up and say, that the church of Christ here on earth was a high distinction, which all bodies professing Christianity claimed as their own, but let us consider what the Scriptures say concerning it—they say it is the body of Christ, of which He is the high and holy Head—that it receives strength and nourishment from the Head—that as the oil was poured upon the head of Aaron, which ran down his beard to the nethermost skirts of his garments, so doth the unction from the holy One, run down from the highest to the lowest member of His body—that Christ is the officiating minister in His church, making use of servants and handmaids, as He did in the Jewish church—that such are made holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, as He told his people formerly, " Be ye holy, for I am holy," as the Head is holy so must the members (the body) be holy also, by

having their robes made white in the blood of the Lamb, who is the Word of God—which Word is in each of us, as a swift witness against every appearance of evil, reproofing and condemning it, and as we submit thereto, our sins will be washed away, and we shall be clothed with the fine linen, which is the righteousness of the saints—that it is not [a mere reliance on] Christ without us which will give us admittance into the kingdom of heaven, though we may plead having eaten and drunk in His presence, and that He taught in our streets—it is Christ within us that will give us the blessed hope of glory—for there is no seed can destroy sin in man but Christ the Seed of the woman—and if we live in sin and die in it, “Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, I know you not,” is the sentence on those who are not washed and cleansed by the inspeaking Word of God, who told His disciples, “Now ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you.” The Meeting concluded under a solemn covering.

FROM CHARLES PARKER TO JOHN CONRAN.

Yealand, *Fourth Month 6th*, 1821.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was duly favoured with thy acceptable letter, and glad to observe therefrom the revival of an exercise in your Quarterly Meeting to extend labour

for the help of each other, and to carry home and communicate to individuals and families what may be unfolded to you of their states and conditions—to point out the path of danger, and hold forth the inviting language of “Come brother, come sister, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways,” &c. In my younger days an exercise of this sort was yearly performed in the meeting wherein I resided, by appointment of the Monthly Meeting, and I think I am a witness of its profitable tendency, both among the youth and others : but it hath been rarely moved in of later years, and then mostly under the concern of individuals who have been travelling in the work of the ministry *only*. Probably it may be allowable to think that, in consequence of the decline of such care, defect and indifference have more abounded, and the love of many has become more cold ; it has at least been evident, in many places, that deadness and formality have more prevailed, and, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” has been the language more exhibited in conduct, if not in expression, for want of minding and improving the gift that is in them.

I can feelingly sympathize with my dear friends in Ireland, they have had much to try them, and much to discourage them ; yet the Lord’s arm is not shortened that He cannot save, nor His ear

grown heavy that He cannot hear the secret breathings and petitions of His dependent children and people. But the things of time and of sense have tended greatly to weaken, as well as the undue influence of false brethren; and I cordially unite in desire that my fellow-professors, both in Ireland and the land of my nativity, may come out from them and be separate—may not touch the unclean thing, that He may receive us, and be unto us a Father, and we become His sons and daughters. Thy remark concerning those who have separated from you, and are not now of you, I cordially unite with, for, however cases may differ as to the cause of departure of any, something is at least due as an acknowledgment from such who desire to return; and if they are made sensible of their mistake, and the real ground of their desire for a reunion with the body arise from conviction, I do hope it will be no task to such, but rather a relief, to make their situation truly known, and cause it to accompany their request.

I am, with sincere esteem, thy affectionate friend,

CHARLES PARKER.

Hay, in Brecknockshire, Wales,

17th of *Fourth Month*, 1821.

Being here on my journey, I am desired to present thee with the love of our dear friend, Nathan Hunt, whom I expect thou wilt see in Dublin, and

may add, that I feel helped on my way, as I was favoured to be in Ireland.

14th.—Monthly Meeting in Lurgan: this morning early before I arose, I felt a gentle stream of Gospel truths flow in my mind for some time, some portions of holy writ were opened in a view that I never saw before; when I arose, all was wiped out, and a trying poverty succeeded, in which I secretly craved that I might be spared going to meeting; but I had to go, and in it the waters rose so high as to become a broad river to swim in of new matter, what I saw in the morning not appearing; sundry states were clearly opened and spoken to, the previous baptism I passed through showed me clearly to whom the praise belonged, to me it did not, for without His holy help I can do nothing that is good.

Fifth Month 13th.—As I lay awake early this morning I felt life spring up in my mind with this expression, “I will be with thee wherever thou goest,” which brought thanksgiving and praise to Him who liveth for ever. I felt myself most unworthy to be thus cared for, but He careth for the sparrows, and a hair of our head falleth not to the ground without His notice. In the meeting I was low and poor till near the conclusion, when I felt a little life to arise, with an invitation to come to

Christ and learn of Him who is meek and lowly of heart—that He being the express image of His Father, full of grace and full of truth, what teacher on earth can we find so capable and able to bring us to God? He invites us this day to learn of Him, but the stumbling-block is in the way—His yoke must be taken up, His cross borne, which is the teaching of His holy Spirit, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts; for He will not pour the new wine of His heavenly kingdom into our old bottles, all must be made new. There was a sweet solemnity over the meeting, and under it we separated: it may be said “He wakeneth me morning by morning, He wakeneth my ear to hear as the learned.”

Sixth Month 5th.—Our Quarterly Meeting concluded, many of the younger class attended; I think I may say it was a favoured meeting, and that the great Head of the church vouchsafed His holy presence at times amongst us, and I hope broke the bread of life, and handed it through His instruments to the comfort and consolation of some who were of the mourners in Zion. My baptisms previous to this season for some weeks were trying;—am I forsaken? hast thou forgotten to be gracious? But I was favoured with patience and hope to sustain me, as upon examination, into which I was led, I did not find any transgression brought

against me. I do not remember any meeting in which I was more helped than in this : to Him only be the praise, who is the helper of those who put their whole trust in Him !

Seventh Month 8th.—As I sat in meeting, a flow of sound gospel doctrines moved in my mind, connected and supported by appropriate portions of Scripture ; but though I could subscribe in my judgment to them as gospel truths, yet I kept still in my retirement, not feeling the life with them [requiring utterance], which is more than meat to the soul that truly waits for that bread which comes not from men, but from heaven ; for nothing but the Spirit of God can gather to God, according to the doctrine of our blessed Lord, that of ourselves we can do nothing. At length life arose, and I stood up in it, and declared the state I had been baptised into, comparing it to that the prophet Elijah was tried with in the mount, when the supernatural appearances of the strong wind, the earthquake and the fire, passed before him. He was not moved by them, but remained in the cave, for the Lord was not with them. He came forth when he heard the still small voice, wrapping his face in his mantle, by keeping his eye steadily fixed on the Lord, his holy Head, he was mercifully preserved from the [delusion of the] false prophet, and received his commission to “go and anoint,” &c. I

had to compare the above state to that of such as take upon themselves, and are appointed by man, as ministers of the Gospel, not waiting for nor even expecting the Divine unction from the Holy One to qualify them, and so come ready prepared with written documents compiled from the holy Scriptures, which the natural man easily comprehends and readily subscribes to, bearing in his view such a resemblance [to his state] as face answers face in a glass, but going away under these impressions which are superficially made by man, he straightway forgets what manner of man he is. But the words of Christ preaching in the heart are with that power from above as reaches to the edifying of his body in love, and the convincement of the hearers that we must no longer continue in sin if we expect to be incorporated as members in Christ's body.* His church militant on earth—and that Christ *in us*, by His light and grace, is our only hope of glory. The true gospel ministers turn the hearers to Him as a Teacher, and from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, and who cannot, with all his acquired learning, make that strait in himself which is by nature crooked, nor open his own blind eyes to see

* I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear *my words*, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings."—*Jeremiah* xxiii. 21, 22.

the beauty there is in holiness, and that the end thereof is eternal life. I had to compare the ministry of such to the three appearances which Elijah could not acknowledge as proceeding from God; the earthquake to the agitations proceeding from the natural affections of the man, which never can produce in any the righteousness of God—neither that strong windy doctrine as if it would rend the mountains and break the rocky heart in pieces — nor was the Divine Power in the fiery zeal which some cover their delivery in as with a cloak—these must pass away, because they are not from God, and the still small voice be waited for, which always will convey certainty of duty and our present states to the true waiter in faith and patience.

Seventh Month 15th.—A field of offering was presented to my view at meeting on various subjects in holy writ, and I stood up with a pretty clear opening, and proceeded for some time, when a cloud overshadowed me, and I paused, and the whole was taken from me. A spirit of unbelief seemed to be the cloud I felt, to which I had to turn, and suitable doctrine was furnished largely to prove from Scripture the Divinity of our most blessed Lord—that He was the Son of God, and not of Joseph—and that if we did not believe in His second coming in Spirit, to do away sin and to finish transgression in

those who believe in Him, such would lose the benefit of His coming in the flesh, and remain dead in trespasses and sins. It was a laborious exercise I passed through, but I felt clear; the wisdom of man is foolishness in the sight of God!

To ———

DEAR FRIEND,

It was encouraging to me to hear that any portion of the manuscript I committed to the inspection of thy dear father has merited his approbation, with that of my much valued and beloved friend, N. H. Thou mayst trace out the way the way-faring men have to travel; many are the trials and probations they have to pass through, but the Lord delivers them out of them all; the dross is to be purged out, and then comes forth the vessel for the finer. Oh! my dear friend, the ways of God with man in the regeneration are past his finding out; the changeableness of apparel they have to put on has more colours than Joseph's coat, yet it is the garment the beloved child has to wear; and though false brethren may be the means of starving and selling the owner into bondage, nevertheless the Lord is with him, and in His own time will deliver him: the rod of the wicked shall not always rest on the lot of the righteous. We may have in such times to walk through the shadow of death, yet

through faith we shall fear no evil; His rod and His staff shall comfort us, and we shall be led from one degree of strength to another.

The awful situation you were placed in lately affected me; I may say my heart expanded in secret thanksgiving for your preservation, and that the fire was not suffered to kindle upon you. The same Almighty hand which preserved the three children was extended for your deliverance; and I have not any doubt but thanksgiving and praise were secretly poured out in remembrance that His mercies, both ancient and new, will continue for ever to those who put their trust in Him, to those who will not bow down to the golden image which is [as it were] set up in the plain of Dura by spiritual Nebuchadnezzar. Hold on, my beloved friend, worship the God of thy fathers in faithfulness and in truth; dedicate to Him the first ripe fruits of His own husbandry, and sacrifice the lamb both evening and morning, and thy works will meet with acceptance before Him. Although that old altar upon which many sacrifices and oblations have been previously offered was permitted to fall to the ground, yet we should not be too much discouraged or lay it to heart; the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands, His worship will continue the same as before, and the temple which He dedicates to Himself will stand whilst a man stands upon the

earth. He never will leave Himself without a witness to celebrate His praise and to speak well of His adorable name. I feel the tendering impressions of best love at this time for thee, [and in it desire] that thou mayst hold fast that which thou hast received, and let no man or thing take thy crown, which the Lord has crowned thee with in the day of thy espousals.

J. CONRAN.

Eleventh Month 17th, First-day.—I had an open time to explain some of the mysteries of godliness as they are hidden under the types and ordinances of the law of Moses, which the natural man cannot explain, as he does not comprehend them, being only and alone to be spiritually understood. The Divine Being burying the body of Moses, the place whereof was never found by the natural man, was opened to my view, and expressed nearly after this manner,—that the spirituality of the law of Moses was buried by God under the types and figures and ordinances, which were no more than the patterns of the holy things themselves which were shown unto him in the Mount, (“see that thou make all things according to the pattern shown unto thee in the Mount,”)—these were only the shadows, the substance of them were reserved in heaven for Christ, who was the Prophet that was to come, to

be a Lawgiver like unto Moses ("Him shall ye hear")—the shadows did not profit them to whom they came; their bodies fell in the wilderness, save a few, a remnant. But Christ being come a High Priest of good things, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, to purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. I had an open time to declare of the majesty and infinite power of Almighty God, displayed at Mount Sinai at the delivery of the law by Moses, preceded by thunderings and lightnings, and the sound of the trumpet exceeding loud; the mountain smoked as a furnace, because the Lord descended in fire, and the mountain quaked greatly, and the people trembled—that He is the same to-day that He was in generations that are past, His power the same, and can make the earthly-minded men to tremble, if they will resist and refuse to receive the law at His hand, and to cast their idols of silver and gold to the moles and the bats.

Fourth Month 17th, 1822.—My morning retirements of late have been barren and unfruitful, I toil and row all the night, and do not catch anything, yet I persevere through heights and through depths, hoping when the Master comes I shall be instructed to let down the net on the right side of

the ship: this state experimentally shows me that without Him I cannot do any thing that is good. I am preparing to attend the Yearly Meeting in Dublin, perhaps by this baptism, with other distressing assaults of the enemy, which cause me to cry out for help; this seems sometimes long in coming, and occasions me to call more than twice or thrice before it comes, when my lips begin (spiritually) to tremble, fearing lest my soul should not find rest in the day of trouble. These may be necessary preparations for humility, that we may not take any thing to ourselves but that which belongs to us, shame and confusion of face.

Sixth Month 15th.—The Monthly Meeting held in Lurgan, a very small gathering, and a poor low time; when the meeting for discipline was about closing, under a painful exercise I felt on account of the meeting, (about eight or nine men) I told them I remembered when there were sixty-three families who were esteemed in membership, and about sixty families not in membership, when I visited them, the former in their houses, and the latter in three sittings, at convenient places—that, before I had much or any expectation of being united to Friends, in that meeting-house I received the first feelings impressed on my mind that my Redeemer lived, which produced joy and rejoicing in my heart, and broke me into many tears, and I wept aloud—that

in that meeting-house, about eight years after, my mouth was first opened in a public testimony for that Principle of light [and life from Him,] which had formerly been experienced by me there, in these expressions, "Oh! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets," &c., "how often would I have gathered thy children," &c., "and ye would not, therefore your house is left unto you desolate!"—desiring Friends to see if this prophecy was not fulfilling, or nearly so, and I believed others would be called in to fill their places.

25th.—This morning early, as I lay still, some passages of Scripture were opened in my mind in a clearer manner than I had seen them before, they flowed gently on, so that I compared them to Shiloh's brook, which runs softly, and at the same time waters and fertilizes the ground it passes through, by increasing faith, which produces good fruits. The wind which brought this state blew unexpectedly; whence it cometh or whither it goeth, no man, as man, knoweth. I was deeply humbled, and poured out thanksgivings that such an one as I am should be thus favoured; there were then, as on other similar occasions, some of the secret things which belong to God communicated unto me, which are not lawful to write at this time, but are to be laid up in the treasury till the key of David opens and brings them forth in the newness of life. There

is a treasury in the temple of our hearts where these gifts are to be cast in, and not brought forth to such whose spiritual ears have not been opened by the finger of God ; till then they would only be objects of curiosity to the vain mind, which being satisfied, the remembrance of them would pass away, and leave not a profitable trace behind : therefore it requires the same watchful state in which they were communicated to preserve them inviolate, that we may not deck ourselves with our Lord's jewels, or gratify the vain mind in others.

Ninth Month.—I attended the Quarterly Meeting at Grange, near Dungannon, which was the largest, I think, I ever saw in this province. Mary Watson was there, and had large service. Just before the meeting closed, I stood up, and said that I felt that which was better than words, comparable to the dew descending upon the tender herb, which would make it green and fruitful if it were permitted to rest upon it—that I believed it was the love of God that was thus shed over the assembly, for our encouragement, not to cast away our hope and confidence, though we may feel in a state of desertion, but in order to quicken us to advance, for that we are not forsaken—desiring that we may endeavour to carry home to our families a share of what has been now dispensed to us, as “a piece of flesh and a flagon of wine,” that they also may be made par-

takers with us. The meeting closed under a solemn covering, and I came home in peace.

[About this time he received a letter from John Kirkham, of Essex, alluding so agreeably to the visit which they paid together to the families of Friends in Dublin, that an extract from it is here given]:—

Edinburgh, *Ninth Month 28th*, 1822.

——“I have often remembered our visit at Dublin, and still feel considerable satisfaction in the remembrance of it; for though it was attended with [deep] exercise, yet, in abundant mercy, the end thereof was peace. This thou canst say (with some others) is that which fully repays for all; and I doubt not but thou wilt be pleased to hear that a measure of this is at times the attendant of my mind, in having now nearly finished my visit to the dear Friends of this land. I have been as far as Kinmuck, and returned to this city on Fifth-day from Aberdeen. Dear John and Elizabeth Wigham, of that city, are in tolerable health, but are getting very infirm; they cannot do much more in travelling but to and from their own meeting. There are a few choice Friends both at Kinmuck, Aberdeen, and Glasgow, amongst whom I was permitted to be comforted, which I esteem a great favour from the holy Head of His own church and people. My spirit salutes thee, dear friend, in kind love, and

herein I remain very affectionately thy sincere friend,

JOHN KIRKHAM.

Eleventh Month.—The approaching Quarterly Meeting brings to me its usual baptisms, leanness and deeply-trying poverty. These feelings accompany me mostly in the night season, when I lie for hours awake, resigning myself up entirely to Divine disposal, who knows best what is fitting for me, desiring nothing more than mercy, and that He would be pleased to preserve my feet from falling into any snare that would lessen my faith and confidence in Him, whom I love above all things, and whose displeasure in the least degree I dread, but at the same time that He would not spare any thing in me which should be done away. Thus I am travelling on in the path which the vulture's eye hath not seen; the wisdom of man will not walk therein, but the wayfaring man (though a fool as to worldly wisdom) shall not err therein. This I esteem to be the way cast up for the ransomed and redeemed to walk in; it leads to that self-abasement which puts no confidence in the flesh. This was the way Paul was travelling in to humble him, lest he should be exalted above measure by his visions; the Divine light shining in his heart, and showing to him that in his flesh dwelleth no good thing, and so mortify-

ing was the view, that instead of patiently dwelling under it till it produced its full effect upon him, he cried out twice to be relieved from it: this was a necessary baptism, preparing to place no manner of confidence in any thing that is short of the assistance of the grace of God, immediately revealed. May it always be my blessed experience to be thus baptized into a lively sense of my state and condition by nature, in which I cannot do any good thing; that in the Lord's own time I may be favoured with the renewings of His holy Spirit, which will bring with them life and immortality to light, to the strengthening and refreshing of my soul in God, through Jesus Christ my Lord.

In the First Month, 1823, the eldest son in this family, residing near Dublin, was taken ill with a fever, in which he lay above forty days, and was attended by three doctors; the sorrowful tidings came here that the doctors had but little hopes of him, which threw the family into deep distress. That day I felt and sympathized with them very nearly, and retiring with these impressions into my chamber, I felt my spirit drawn forth in prayer, that if it was consistent with the Divine will, he might be spared, they being a family who had afforded me shelter when I had been turned out of two houses, and had treated me kindly. When I had ended, this language was clearly impressed on my mind,

"Thy petition is granted." My faith in it was severely tried before it was accomplished ; for about five weeks he was confined to his bed, and once or twice was laid out as if he was going ; but last week he showed such favourable symptoms that the doctors were discharged, and his mother returned home from attending him.

Second Month 6th, 1823.—Long before day-light, I felt my mind impressed with the doctrine of perfection, which we maintain as a religious Society, and is opposed by other Christian professors as impossible and contrary to Scripture ; whereas Scripture declares man was made in the image of God—the impression here received was holy, harmless as to the other parts of the animal creation, (his food being confined to the green herbs and fruits ;) he was a stranger to every sinful appetite, worshipping God in spirit and in truth, not having any temples made with hands ; his union and communion was with God—he walked with Him, he knew His voice, and followed it. Here was a state of perfection, laid out for man during his residence here below, had he obeyed the Divine command ; God saw that this state was good, and blessed it. From this by transgression he fell, and introduced sin in the place thereof, and death to this blessed state through sin ; thereby losing the union and communion of the Holy Spirit. In this state of darkness and de-

reliction, man found out many inventions, and set up a form of worship, in imitation of that he had lost, which being of his own invention, led him forth from God to the lower creation, and he became so darkened, that he worshipped he knew not what ; he lost the dominion over that part of God's creation, and instead of being their lord and master, he became their servant, and worshipped them ; he lost the dominion of himself, and became servant to sin and sin-pleasing pleasures, and thereby loving darkness rather than the light, which condemned his evil deeds, he found himself unable to overcome this state, and on this ground it is that man denies an overcoming to be attainable : whereas Christ came into the world to put an end to sin and finish transgression in all those who are willing to deny the corrupt nature, by daily taking up the cross and following his holy requirings. Thus the natural man knows not the redeeming power of Jesus Christ, because he is not of the willing and obedient who eat the good of the land ; whilst the truly spiritual man knows these things, yea the deep things of God ; and as the Divine Seed of light and life abideth in him, the temptation [to sin] is seen in the light, and the life reduces it in obedience to the cross, and thereby freedom from sin is obtained in proportion to the measure of Divine grace afforded, being a portion of that fulness which was found in

our dear and blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. So that our freedom from spiritual Pharaoh may be obtained by submission to Him who is a Prophet and Lawgiver like unto Moses, that Moses declared unto Israel should be raised up, and whom they should hear.

Third Month 9th. First-day. — Meeting at Moyallen: in this meeting I was enlarged more than usually, which has been my comfortable experience for one or two years past, now in the eighty-fourth year of my age, when the natural life manifests a decay, yet the spiritual candle (or life) burns brighter; this was promised some time past, when I was bemoaning my leanness after near forty years in the exercise of the gift bestowed upon me.

15th.—The Monthly Meeting held in Moyallen was favoured.

18th.—Before day-light, a spring of Gospel ministry flowed in my mind for about an hour, and many precious truths were opened before me, to my admiration, in such a manner as man's wisdom never had done before to my understanding, which caused me to praise and magnify the great and holy Giver of every good and perfect gift; for in Him dwelleth knowledge, and wisdom, and understanding, which man in his best and first estate cannot comprehend nor understand. The evening and night after the Monthly Meeting, I sat at the gate very

much stripped, for the meeting had been much favoured; in that low estate I continued till after meeting the next day, when this relief was afforded to me, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." The absence of Him whom my soul loveth is felt, and leads to a jealousy lest I should have done something that occasioned it; but when the clouds disperse, and the sun again breaks out, though grief may be for a night, yet joy comes in the morning without clouds.

23rd.—First-day meeting at M.: I had to contend in testimony with that spirit of infidelity which had laid waste many in this quarter, as well as in many other places, the remnant of which still is to be found hereaway; they hide their heads now, but the sting is in their tails. The doubt of a virgin bringing forth a son was cleared before me, in the view of God's omnipotence, who at first created man from the dust of the earth, and by His Word said, "Let there be light, and there was light"—in David, He said, "I will make my first-born higher than the kings of the earth"—He had the priority of every other creature, being the first born of every creature, and the first born from the dead; and was the Head of the church, which was named after Him the church of the first-born, the image of the invisible God, the fulness of whom dwelt in Him bodily—and "to which of the angels said He at any

time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? but to the Son he said, Thy throne, Oh God! is for ever and ever," &c. If these, and many other portions of holy writ, do not describe Him amply as the Son of God, and not [merely] of man, to such as do not believe them, preaching is in vain.

After meeting, there was a funeral attended by a large gathering, [whom I reminded] that the present opportunity bore testimony that man from the earth was taken, and to the earth was to be returned, and the soul to God, who created it, for a purpose of glorifying Himself—the uncertainty of our time here should awaken us to the consideration how we are prepared to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to render an account of the deeds done in our bodies—if we have done well, the answer will be, "Well done, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;" if the contrary, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity!" There was a solemnity over the large gathering, and peace was the covering of my mind. After dinner, I walked into the garden, and as I walked musing, my lips were opened, as if a hand had done it, by the Spirit of prayer and supplication in vocal words of thanksgiving and praise, and humble acknowledgments of manifold mercies and kindnesses received from him who liveth and reigneth for ever, God blessed for ever and ever. Amen.

Fourth Month 9th.—My attention has lately been occupied by [the consideration] of the rest which is prepared for the people of God: this is, I believe, generally understood to be eternal in the heavens. There is a rest to be found in this life, reserved only and alone for God's people, those who are willing to enter therein, resting from their own labours as God rested from His. When our eyes are anointed and Divinely opened, we shall see in the light, which then shines in our dark hearts, that our works of righteousness, in which we have taken up our rest, and from which we hoped to reap eternal life, were the works of man, which never did or can produce the righteousness that God will accept. Nothing can bring the soul of man to God but the Spirit of God; our blessed Lord spoke positively that of ourselves we can do nothing, and that without His Divine aid our own works will avail nothing. The young man who came to Christ, pleading his righteousness from his youth up, and asking what else he lacked, stumbled at the cross, would not follow Christ further, but went away sorrowful. And Paul, who was faultless in the observations of an outward profession of religion, when the light from heaven shone around him, he counted his former works of righteousness but as dross and dung, which could not profit him, so that he might gain the spiritual knowledge of Christ. These are some of

the mysteries of godliness, which are hid with God, and only can be revealed by His beloved Son, for whom are all things, and in whom the fulness of wisdom dwells—"the Lord our righteousness!" He worketh in us those things which we cannot do for ourselves—if we be willing and obedient, we shall eat the good of the land.

18th.—The Monthly Meeting being appointed to be held at Rathfriland, and the weather very boisterous, discouraged me very much, so that in my retirement I sought to be released from the concern to attend it, pleading my old age, and the desire I felt to go to the ensuing Yearly Meeting, in which I might be disappointed by taking cold now; I was quickly answered in these expressions, "Let him who has two coats impart to him who has none," which immediately silenced me. This meeting was raised up near eighty years since, or more, by conviction, but is at present in a very low state, and their number very small. After a deep exercise, I was engaged in a close testimony—I hope in that love which flows from the Fountain of all true love—endeavouring to stir them up from that lukewarm state which shut them out from the Divine strength. Through favour I got home safely, and thankful that I was strengthened to go and fulfil the requiring—He is strength in weakness, and riches in poverty!

Sixth Month 27th.—I have been for some time past a mourner in Zion, travelling heavily on, bemoaning myself and my situation among a people of unclean lips—my dwelling in the cottage in the vineyard—no fellow-traveller to travel with me; yet the language of my spirit has been “Not my will, but thine, Oh Lord! be done.” I was made willing to bear my portion of His righteous indignation, as Ezekiel had to lie 390 days on one side for the [iniquity of the] house of Israel, and forty days on the other side for the sin of Judah.

Seventh Month 4th.—Week-day meeting here, to me it was a night season; I rowed on, but caught nothing—I rested on my oar, believing the Lord was present, though I did not perceive Him: I came away in peace and not disconsolate. In bed this night or early in the morning, as I lay awake, I felt the Day-spring from on high to descend three times at intervals very unexpectedly, which brought me into a reverend frame of silent waiting, not feeling any communication to attend it; I bowed in thankfulness, acknowledging the unmerited condescension of the great and good Giver!

13th.—First-day meeting at Moyallen; a very small beginning, through faith increased to a favoured opportunity. The promised increase is fulfilled beyond my expectation, which is a comfort to my old age; my faith is strong in the Lord, and

my trust is in His might ; thankful I am that I am often favoured to feel the sentence of death in myself, that I may not trust in myself, but in the living God who raiseth the dead, and His own works praise Him. There has been much labour bestowed on this meeting, but with sorrow I say there is little or no visible signs even of the buddings of good, much less of fruit after so much labour. Zion, hereaway, if she is redeemed from the evil of her way, it must be (I believe) through judgment, for I apprehend from the increasing neglect of religious meetings, and the low times experienced when the few meet together, that there is rather a return to bondage than travelling on to the promised land. I believe this to be my allotted place ; therefore though I mourn, as Baruch did, that the Lord hath seen meet to add grief to my sorrow, yet I endeavour to confide in a similar promise to him—that my life shall be given me for a prey in every land where I shall go.

JOHN CONRAN TO HENRY HULL.

Moyallen, *Eighth Month*, 1823.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received thy agreeable favour of Sixth Month 2nd, conveying comfortable intelligence of thyself and family, which is truly satisfactory to me. I do not doubt but it will be equally pleasing to thee to understand by the present opportunity that I am

still continued, in the natural as well as in the spiritual struggling for life, with which I humbly hope I am mercifully favoured. I am now eighty-four years of age, and my health and strength of body equal to attend some of our meetings in this province, and I was at our last Yearly Meeting in Dublin, which I think was acknowledged by our great and good Master. I send thee a paper which will explain itself, in order to shew thee that my thoughts are still engaged for Zion's prosperity, and that my wish is that peace may be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces ; this has been (I trust) my concern these fifty years, that I have been engaged in His service. I need not praise it to thee, who has so often and to my knowledge experienced His bounty ; His faithful servants always bear this testimony, that He is the best of masters, it is the idle and slothful who call Him "an austere man." He has not cast me off in my old age as not worthy of my food and raiment ; thanks be to Him, He gives me a sufficiency of both, which He was pleased to promise, that my allowance should not be abridged in my latter days, and this is fulfilled, with a hope that the end will crown all.

I have been at times tried in cloudy seasons, [with the query] how we as a Society, could possibly be [of] the church militant here on earth,

when I have painfully had to behold the impure mixture which compose it; the doctrines are as high as men can bear—to believe in the Light, and to walk in it, is to walk with God, as Enoch did of old—it translated him, and would translate us from earth to heaven, from being earthly-minded to be heavenly-minded. These considerations at times have brought serious reflections whether the church has not again retired into the wilderness, and that we only hold the doctrines, the substance being gone; but this has only occurred in my humiliations, under which I have kept silence, and have not inquired after so many living evidences in myself, as well as in other servants, “Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?” But my bow abode in strength, the arms of my hands were made strong through the mighty God of Jacob, and therefore the armies of the aliens were put to flight; and in compassion to my weakness, the enclosed was opened to me, as it may inform thee; I send it, not to take anything to myself, but my desert, shame and confusion of face, and my motive in sending it is that I believe it will gratify thee to find thy former fellow-labourer is not standing idle, looking on other men’s labours, but is still endeavouring to fill up the day’s work, in order to get the penny at last.——My sight is much impaired, otherwise but little room to complain.

With affectionate regards to thyself, thy dear companion, and children, I subscribe myself thy truly affectionate brother and friend,

J. C.

I still lodge in Moyallen, my son lives in the bounds of Moate meeting with his wife and children, a farmer.

Tenth Month 20th.—This day eighty-four years I was born in Dublin—many trials and probations I have passed through since in order to prove me and fashion me to the present shape I am formed into ; I may say I have passed from death to life, through the unsearchable mercies of God, who plucked my feet out of the mire of sin, and the clay of worldly pursuits, and has set them upon the Rock which followed Israel of old, and is the Rock of ages, and of the just and righteous of the present generation ; and He has put a new song into my mouth, to praise and magnify Him who liveth and reigneth for ever and for evermore, God blessed for ever !
Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

1824. VARIOUS EXERCISES AND OPENINGS IN SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE—CONCLUSION OF HIS JOURNAL—TESTIMONY OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF LISBURN CONCERNING HIM.

Second Month, 1824.—I returned from B. after a week's absence; in one of the meetings there I had to address some whose lamp was gone out, and they were sensible of it, that they were not prepared to answer the awful summons if it should come whilst they were in this situation; I said I believed this impression was made on their minds by Him who willeth not the death of any, for His gracious will is that all who have erred and strayed from His heavenly sheep-fold should return, repent, and live; and therefore I recommended it as the loving mercy of God in Christ Jesus, to awaken them from that sleep of forgetfulness, which if continued in much longer might terminate in death. A solemn stillness covered the meeting, and I believed the state was reached. I was invited to spend an evening at their house, but did not go—

if any good is performed, let it be the Lord's work, and not man's.

[During this latter period of his life, he appears in his early waking hours, or other seasons of retirement, when prostrated in awful silence before God, to have often been favoured with a flow of Scripture doctrine, which was spiritually explained to his understanding in a remarkable manner, so as to fill him with humble admiration and grateful praise; he frequently committed these passages, with the heads of their explanations to writing, whilst fresh in his memory, and on one of these occasions remarks how suddenly these Divine openings were closed, as if a person had been reading to him in a book, which was afterwards shut, and the communications which had been in the Divine light ceased, adding] not one sentence I think could I remember a few minutes after, I could not read any more in *that book*, neither did I attempt it, but abode in the quiet submission. The cause assigned to me this morning for it is, to convince me from whence these openings proceeded; if from my own judgment, meditations, or compiling, they would not have been so suddenly obliterated as never till latterly to make the least appearance on my recollection, as other circumstances have done. The Scriptures are a sealed book to the natural man, and none can break the seals but the Lion of the

tribe of Judah, whom his own works do praise. [At another time he says], These seasons [of Heavenly good] have appeared to me as somewhat of what Paul alludes to in the passage concerning "the washing of regeneration and the renewings of the Holy Ghost," and are thus at times permitted for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls in our weary travail and deep baptisms, lest we should faint by the way; they would be to us as the brook was to Elijah, who having drunk thereof, travelled in that strength, in the bitterness of his spirit (baptism), till he came to the mount of God, where he heard the voice of God commissioning and appointing him to further services in the church; under which refreshment his strength and faith were renewed to resist the appearances of the fire, the earthquake, and the strong wind—to know the still small voice, and to follow its requiremings—submitting to the necessary baptisms for a minister.

Seventh Month 21st.—As I sat in retirement this forenoon, I was led to contemplate some of the privileges attendant on a membership in the militant church; this is that body of which Christ is the high and holy Head, from whom the members receive their nourishment, and qualification for use and service in it. Some receive five talents, some three, and some one, which when occupied with, [even by such as seem as the uncomely parts of the body] more abun-

dant honour is bestowed : when these are called forth to exercise their talent in the life and power of the Gospel, the beholders will clearly perceive that they “know not letters,” and their education has been low and mean—from whence then proceeds this flow of words so fitly spoken, and well applied to the truths of the Gospel and the mysteries typified in the law ? not from school learning, it is evident—they must therefore against their will be compelled to acknowledge that the same Teacher who taught the disciples in the beginning, taught them, and that they had been in the school of Christ—after this manner more abundant honour is conferred. This may be encouraging to [such as are comparable to] the ram’s horns in the hand of the great High Priest, which were instrumental formerly, we may remember, to bring down the walls of Jericho, the first conquest made on the other side Jordan, and should encourage the one talented not to lightly esteem the smallness of their gift, and to remember, that man is not to live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God.

FROM RICHARD COCKIN TO JOHN CONRAN.

Doncaster, *Eleventh Month 9th*, 1824.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

Thy cordially acceptable salutation, dated Fifth Month 11th, claimed an earlier proof than the pre-

sent, that it afforded us much pleasurable satisfaction to receive another letter from thee, although it was at the same time accompanied by a considerable drawback, on account of thy increasing disability for letter writing which was so manifest; it was however, an occasion of rejoicing to us, in having again to observe, that the best things remain uppermost with thee, and that spiritual greenness continues to be the clothing of thy mind. It was also very pleasant to us to hear that thou hadst again been enabled to attend the Yearly Meeting [in Dublin], and to mingle in exercise with thy friends in endeavouring to promote the best interests of our Society, of which thou wast so kind as to give us an interesting account: so that notwithstanding bodily weakness is becoming thy enfeebling attendant, yet thy love to thy friends, and to the precious cause of Truth, appears to remain unabated—which I regard as a certain evidence, that thy spiritual health is preserved in a quickened lively state; and this, my dear friend, I trust will be continued to the end, so as that thou mayst have to adopt the consoling language of the apostle, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me.”

How cheeringly animating is the prospect, when

a portion of that living faith is vouchsafed, which enables the tribulated traveller Zionwards, to afresh thank God and take courage — mayst thou, my beloved friend, witness thy spiritual strength so replenished with faith and confidence in Almighty sufficiency, that as thy bodily powers are increasingly feebler, thy mind may be sustained, as with an anchor sure and stedfast. It may be permitted to thee, as it is the lot of many other travellers, to be tried at seasons, with discouraging impressions, yea at times fears, doubts, and enfeebling reasonings may be the depressing feeling of the poor mind, when the enemy may assail us with renewed attempts, to weaken our trust and confidence in the redeeming power of the Saviour of men ; so that there is still need for us to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation, and so long as we are clothed with humanity, so long there appears a necessity for us to endeavour to have our minds centred in a state of humble dependence on Almighty sufficiency for preservation.

We could wish to be affectionately remembered to T. C. and J. Wakefield and children, &c., with other dear friends at Lisburn—it is very grateful to my feelings, to witness the flowings of near regard sweetly attract my mind towards our dear friends in Ireland, to many of whom we are united in the bond of religious fellowship ; under the continued

feeling thereof to thyself, in which my E. C. very cordially unites, I remain thy nearly united and tenderly sympathizing friend, and brother in the Truth,

RICHARD COCKIN.

Eleventh Month 20th.—This morning long before daylight, as I lay mourning over the state I felt both in temporals and spirituals, I remembered the comforts I had enjoyed, when I possessed a domestic establishment, an affectionate wife and children, a house and land, a sufficiency to support them, with other enjoyments. When I contrasted these with my present situation, my wife removed, my only daughter suddenly taken, my son over whom I have often lamented, with his children far distant, and I a lodger in another's house, being houseless, and not one foot of land to call my own, not a relation near to me to close my eyes in a time, perhaps near at hand—these and many more discouraging reflections similar, weighed me down, besides a stripped state of mind. Under the exercise which these produced, I cried, “I am desolate,”—when these words were quickly impressed on my mind, “On a Rock”—it was the voice of the Comforter, who said “that Rock was Christ!” Comfort followed, with thanksgiving and resignation!

First Month 30th, 1825.—I awoke this morning

before daylight, and after some time I was introduced into silence, and into the school of Christ, where for upwards of an hour, I was taught wonderful things out of His law, some of which I believe I had not ever known before; this caused me humbly to be prostrated before Him, and to confess that He is the Wonderful Counsellor, in whom alone was and is the power and ability for every good word and work. Being First-day, in meeting I was clothed spiritually with sackcloth and ashes, but after sitting in this state near an hour and a half, I felt the necessity to move forward, and after some wading, a large field of offering opened before me, much to my comfort and instruction.

Second Month 15th.—This morning I was introduced into that school, wherein is taught the hidden mysteries of godliness, to those only who have their ear opened to hear them, and are found waiting in the temple. Much instruction in heavenly things passed through my mind, in the newness of life. The language of mankind was confused at Babel because they attempted to save themselves, by their own wisdom and understanding, from a return of the waters, they trusted not to that preservation which had so far re-peopled the world, but would be independent of it. God saw the work of men's hands that it was foolishness, therefore frustrated it by confounding their language, which scattered

them over the face of the earth. This confusion of language has continued to this day, and their building, instead of being to them as a tower that would reach to heaven, never raised them higher than earthly things: in this state the natural man is found at this time, not being able by his own strength or wisdom, to reach to that purity of language which was lost, in which God can be acceptably and truly worshipped as God, and which can only be recovered by the instructions and teachings of the Holy Ghost. From this state of confusion, proceed the many modes of worship in the world, in which very many may be said to worship, they know not what; some in their prayer call God their Father, when their works plainly shew whose children they are—they call Him their Lord and Master, and disobey His righteous commands every day—they pray for forgiveness of their sins, on the terms of forgiving the trespasses of those who sin against them, and they will not forgive any a small trespass, who have trespassed against them, but cast them off till they pay the last farthing—they call heavenly things bitter, which are found to be sweet to the spiritual worshipper—and the Light of the world, which is the spiritual appearance of Jesus Christ in man, shewing to him what is good and the evil of his ways, (for, “that which maketh manifest is Light,”) many say this is man’s natural faculty, and some a

remainder of his first estate before he fell; when the Divine Judge condemned him, that in the day that he eat of the forbidden fruit, he should surely die. Thus was the language corrupted from that purity in which it was taught by God, when man was in the pure image of his Creator, when he could by the aid and assistance of the Holy Spirit, give names to all cattle, and the fowls of the air, and to every beast of the field. But after the fall, the wisdom of man, (the fruit of the forbidden tree) found out many inventions, corrupted the language that was Divinely taught, and introduced the present confusion of tongues, which cannot be brought back to its original purity, but by submitting to and obeying the teachings of the Holy Ghost, without which influence no man can call God his Father, or Christ his Lord, (1 Cor. xii. 3.); nor can any man, but by the same Spirit know who the Son is but the Father, nor who the Father is but the Son, and those to whom the Son reveals Him. This knowledge is denied by some churches, saying that revelation has ceased, that the Scriptures contain all that is necessary for salvation; the above text proves, I think, the necessity of revelation. "To know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent is life eternal." We may gain a knowledge of the Scriptures by reading, or tradition from our parents, and be equal to Apollos, who

was mighty in the Scriptures, and from thence preached Jesus Christ in the synagogues boldly; yet he was not hereby baptized with Christ's baptism, nor received as a minister in Christ's church, till the (spiritual) way of God was taught him more perfectly. I believe the Scriptures are the words of God, given by Him to mankind by inspiration, through holy men of old—that they are a hand-maid to the Holy Spirit, conveying to those, who will receive their testimony, the mind and will of God.

Fifth Month 18th.—The Quarterly Meeting approaching, and my accustomed preparation for it trying baptisms, poverty, and discouragement—the Comforter not come—my sight failed, and little hope of a revival—yet not so far deserted as the prophet Habakkuk, whose faith did not fail under greater privations. Lord, help my faith, and give me to remember when thy candle shone upon my head, and caused me to rejoice in hope that though cast down I was not forsaken—praises be to thy holy Name!

Eighth Month 14th.—I have been for some weeks past under a particular dispensation, a recollection of several incidents of my former life, and which had passed under judgment and condemnation, unto pardon; the remembrance was so fresh, that it required an almost constant watch to exclude them.

This dispensation brought me under a trying humiliation, so that I was often ready and desirous to give up a service of which I felt myself altogether unworthy, and when engaged in it, was so feeble, that I generally was brief and discouraged. This appears to me a state the apostle experienced, when he said nothing belonged to him but shame and confusion of face. I have been greatly abased, though mercifully preserved from yielding up my crown; but through all God was magnified, that His mercy had preserved me, for to Him alone the praise is due. It may be a preparatory baptism for the ensuing Quarterly Meeting, [and if so] I am satisfied to abide under its continuance, desiring that the Lord will not pity, nor His hand spare, till His holy hand has formed and fashioned me to what He would have me to be. My Lord and Master cried out on the cross, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" I have in similar and lesser circumstances, cried out in like manner, but did not feel any condemnation, therefore I am encouraged to hold on my way, hoping to be enabled to do so, unto the end of the race, which is not gained by the swift, but those who hold out to the end will gain the prize. Herein the creaturely part is crucified, and the Lord magnified, because His mercy has endured so long. I believe I may say with the apostle, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I

live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," and the life I now live is not according to the flesh, but in my measure according to the blessed will of the dear Son of God, and to Him is the praise and thanksgiving, now and for ever. Amen.

Written by myself who am almost blind, J. C.

[Many of his latter memoranda were written by a kind friend from dictation.]

Eighth Month 23rd.—Memory is sound—I must say farewell to sublunary enjoyments, and wait my approaching [end], which I do by night and by day, not trusting to any works of righteousness of my own, but to the mercies of God through Christ Jesus.

Twelfth Month 20th.—Last First-day I was at our meeting here, which to me was remarkably hard, a spirit of unbelief to a great degree was felt by me, which shut me up for near two hours, a small share of relief was afforded, but the cloud which had been broken, soon again closed and the light was obscured. In the evening after reading the Scriptures in the family, we had a time of solid retirement, which fully recompensed for the trials in the meeting; the wing of Divine love was felt by me to overshadow us, and under this shadow, I hope we were made to rejoice, in our several measures in solemn silence,

which continued during the remainder of the opportunity. Under this baptism my mind was impressed with this language, "Thy sins and thy iniquities are no more remembered, I have cast them out behind me;" this I could not embrace as being my state and condition, and that the voice that I heard, was the voice of Him whom my soul loveth, being often of late baptized into a recollection of my former manner of life, which led me to say that it is of the Lord's mercy that I was not consumed. In this frame of mind I continued to look from this opening, till it was repeated three or four times, when peace was solemnly proclaimed in my heart, and was the seal that closed it. Thus I believe, we are at times mercifully favoured with a degree of that hope, that the Lord knoweth them that are His. The foundation of the just and righteous of all generations cannot fail, and those who build their hopes thereon shall experience that, though the winds may blow and the rains descend, it will stand. A holy confidence was raised in my mind, which caused me reverently to bow before the Great and Good Giver of it, and to praise and give thanks to Him who is worthy of it, and who liveth and reigneth for ever.

Painful have been my days, and wearisome have been my nights, in waiting for the arising of the Sun of righteousness, who I think has delayed His

coming, which is a trial of my faith and patience ; but as all His ways are wisdom, and past our finding out, I endeavour to submit thereto, and acknowledge my unworthiness, of the favours hitherto bestowed upon me, and strive to be content with the small share of light still vouchsafed.

Fifth Month 14th, 1826.—I returned from the Yearly Meeting in Dublin: it was pretty well attended, and in some of the [sittings we were owned by the] Master of our assemblies, which was an encouragement to His faithful ones ; I was favoured with a little help to get through what was laid upon me, to my satisfaction, and returned in peace.

26th.—This morning early I was favoured to experience the Shepherd's voice, opening and wonderfully expounding many different passages of holy Scripture, which led me to praise and magnify His adorable mercy in condescending to visit and communicate with such a poor mortal as I am. These communications are frequent, which I may call the renewings of the Holy Ghost, to strengthen and refresh the weary traveller, and [in them I recognize] the union and communion of the saints, which our first parents enjoyed in Eden—blessed union and communion, through obedience to the grace of the Holy Spirit !

Tenth Month 1st.—As I sat still this morning

after breakfast, this language passed [livingly] through my mind, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for there is a place prepared for thee in my kingdom—and proceed as hitherto in secret prayer and silent waiting, and thou shalt not be puffed up by whatsoever may be committed to thee."

Twelfth Month 15th.—I am daily waiting my change, having only the mercies of God to trust to.

1827.—I am daily waiting in the temple, if I may be favoured to hear this joyful summons, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," where the wicked cease to trouble, and my weary spirit I trust will experience rest.

[These appear to be the last words recorded in John Conran's Journal, and in a hand almost illegible, he being nearly blind; but he continued to attend meetings, even sometimes at the distance of fourteen miles, as long as his bodily strength permitted it, so great was his desire to wait with his friends for the arising of the heavenly Power of Christ therein, and to be found faithfully occupying with the gift mercifully bestowed upon him, often saying, as an incentive to a more perfect dedication of mind and body, "I serve the Best of masters, who, I can testify from long and precious experience, withholds no good thing from those who faith-

fully serve and obey Him." The following extract from the Testimony concerning him drawn up by the Friends of Lurgan Monthly Meeting will shew how he was engaged with the same zeal in the last meeting he attended, being the day previous to his death] :—With affecting energy, he closely pressed Friends to faithfulness and diligence in attending the meetings for worship and discipline, saying, the parable of the great supper had deeply impressed his mind, by which he was instructed to believe that no excuse, however plausible, would be taken for neglecting those important duties; for none, he thought, could be more reasonable than were mentioned, wherein one having bought a piece of ground, it was but prudent for him to see it before paying for it—another, five yoke of oxen, which it was only reasonable he should be permitted to prove before he paid the purchase-money—whilst a third had married a wife and could not come, having thereby necessarily undertaken to provide for a family, especially as he is declared to be worse than an infidel who provides not for his own. Then mourning over those who were not sensible of their situation, and of the great salvation offered to all, he said, 'I now again tell you what I have so often declared that "other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ."' Then warned all to be careful of neglecting calls from Heaven, and by the servants sent as

messenger after messenger, testifying, "Behold all things are ready," for should they continue to do so, the children's seats at the Lord's table would be filled by others, who beholding the Light, would flock as doves confined in a room to the windows; adding, he was made thankful in being assured that Light had already broken forth and the day had dawned; and when about to resume his seat, he advanced and said, "For thus having been permitted to live to see this day, I praise, honour, and magnify my God!"

THE TESTIMONY

Of the Monthly Meeting of Lisburn concerning our dear friend, JOHN CONRAN, late of Moyallen, deceased.

ALTHOUGH this our beloved friend resided for some years previously to his decease within the compass of another Meeting, we find ourselves engaged to bear a testimony respecting him, having been for the greater part of his life a member of our Monthly Meeting, and many of us having partaken of the benefits of his religious labours.

By a manuscript of his own, it appears that he was born in the city of Dublin, in the year 1739, of parents professing with the Church of England; being in easy circumstances, they gave him a pretty liberal education, having placed him at school at Ballitore, where he remained until fit for business, and was then apprenticed to a person in the linen trade at Lisburn. In this situation, he had more liberty than hitherto, and being a good deal exposed to unsuitable company, was led into many of the dissipations incident to youth; for which, however, it appears he was soon brought under condem-

nation, and was thereby induced frequently to look inward, under a belief that, that which may be known of God is manifest within; to use his own expressions, "his secret breathings began to be after God," he became more diligent in his attendance of public worship, and zealous in the performance of the rites and ceremonies of the profession in which he had been educated. The continued observation of some of these not producing the good effects he had anticipated, he was led, after the lapse of a few years, to look for something more substantial, and secretly cried for deliverance. Sin became a heavy burthen; he gradually forsook the pleasureable amusements in which he had been in the practice of indulging, sat much alone, and in reading the Holy Scriptures, they were often made a means of comfort to his tribulated mind; his desire after stillness and retirement increasing, he was led into a dependence on Divine instruction. The work of religion having thus commenced in good earnest, and his heart prepared for the reception of the Word of Life, he was reached, about the thirty-third year of his age, in an extraordinary manner, under the ministry of Robert Willis, a Friend from America, in a Quarterly Meeting of Friends at Lurgan, into which he had gained admittance, although not a member.

Notwithstanding he was on terms of intimacy

with several individuals of our Society, he had pre-conceived a disrelish to our principles; but his views were now completely changed, and, under a firm conviction of the rectitude of the proceeding, he soon afterwards fully embraced the doctrines and views of Friends, not, however, without passing through many deep conflicts of spirit on this account, and in the retrospect of his former course of life, which was often brought before the view of his mind, attended with a conviction of Divine judgment for transgression; thus having experienced the terrors of the Lord for sin, he afterwards became willing to persuade men.

In the year 1780, our dear friend first appeared in the ministry in a meeting at Lurgan, and continuing faithful to the pointings of duty, he became an acceptable and able minister of the Gospel. Deeply impressed with the solemnity of the nature of the engagement, he was concerned in the exercise of his gift, to move under the influence of the Holy Anointing; and thus abiding in watchfulness and humility, and in reverent waiting and dependence on the Lord alone, his communications were frequently attended with a sense of the baptising power of our Holy Head and High Priest; and although often but short, were weighty and powerful. Skilful in dividing the word aright, he ministered caution, counsel, and reproof to the disobedient and unfaithful, as well as comfort, consolation, and confir-

mation to the tried and drooping mind, and to such as were seeking the way to the kingdom. Often deeply experiencing a state of inward poverty and want, he was eminently qualified to minister to this condition in others.

In the exercise of the discipline of our Society, our dear friend was conspicuously useful. Zealously concerned for the support of our religious testimonies in their ancient simplicity and purity, and for the preservation of our members in soundness of principle and consistency of practice, he was enabled, by the aid of divine Grace, to stand with Christian firmness against that spirit of infidelity which, at one period, was so prevalent, and caused the defection of many in these parts from the standard of Truth. This was a time of great conflict to his mind, but he was favoured to be preserved in steady adherence to the cause he had espoused, and emboldened to testify his belief in the efficacy of the redeeming power of Christ Jesus our Lord, and that it is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saveth us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Through all, he evinced that his chief desire was to be found faithful in the commission he had received, and a good steward of the manifold Grace of God.

In the diligent attendance of our meetings for worship and discipline, our beloved friend was a

bright example, and frequently much exercised on account of those amongst us who were deficient in this respect. He laboured fervently to impress upon the minds of all the necessity of not conforming to the spirit of the world, illustrating by example the doctrine which he preached, by sacrificing everything of a secular nature that might have stood in the way of his performing those religious duties which he believed incumbent on him.

In the year 1805, our dear friend was deprived by death of an amiable wife; a woman of a truly pious disposition, and tenderly beloved by her husband. This, with some other domestic afflictions of a peculiarly trying nature, which were subsequently his portion, he was enabled to bear with Christian resignation and fortitude.

Of late years he did not travel much in the work of the ministry out of the compass of his own Quarterly Meeting; he had, with very little exception, been constant in his attendance of the Half-year's Meeting, and subsequently of the Yearly Meeting in Dublin, up to the year in which his decease occurred, and several times attended the Yearly Meeting in London. It appears also that he paid repeated visits to the meetings of Friends in most parts of this nation; nearly the last engagement of an extensive nature in this way, was in the year 1810, when he visited the families of Friends in Waterford and Clonmel, and having been after-

wards joined by Henry Hull, a Friend from America, then on a religious visit to Friends in Ireland; they were unitedly engaged in a similar service in some other places. In the autumn of 1819, being then nearly eighty years of age, he united with John Kirkham, a Friend from England, in paying a religious visit to the families of Friends of Dublin, much to the satisfaction of his friends, and the peace of his own mind.

In giving forth this testimony to the life, labours, and services of our departed friend, we desire not to exalt the creature, but to magnify and extol that Divine Power, by whose grace he has often been heard to declare, "that he was what he was," and that "to him belonged nothing but shame and confusion of face." He was a man of weighty spirit and deep in religious experience; being possessed of a good understanding and a sound and deliberate judgment, his advice was often sought for by his friends in matters of importance. Thus it may be indeed said, he was truly useful and honourable in his day, and many of us have had cause to rejoice that he was raised up amongst us. Great was his travail of spirit for the welfare of Zion, and the enlargement of her borders—many were the conflicts he endured on account of the desolations in our Society, yet he was often permitted to rejoice in the belief, that although he might not live to witness it, a day was approaching in which the cause

of truth and righteousness would more generally prevail, and in which many would flock to its standard, as doves to the windows.

During his long and useful life he had been favoured to enjoy almost an uninterrupted state of good health, which with the possession of his mental faculties remained with him nearly to the end, although it was evident that his natural strength was gradually on the decline. His removal was rather unexpected, and quite sudden; nevertheless we have good ground to believe, that, as he had not deferred a preparation for eternity to that solemn hour, he was ready for the awful summons; and although we feel our loss to be great, we have no cause to mourn on his account, but rather to rejoice that in the abundant mercy of our Heavenly Father, through the mediation of His beloved Son, our Holy Redeemer, this our dear friend is now, we trust, enjoying in the full fruition of immortal bliss, the reward of dedication to the service of his God, and that as he continued to the last in firm but humble reliance on that Divine Mercy which had accompanied him through life, the same merciful Power, we reverently believe, was his support in the hour of dissolution, and became his conductor through the region and shadow of death into that city whose walls are salvation, and whose gates are praise.

He departed this life at Moyallen, on the 16th day

of the Sixth Month, 1827, in the 88th year of his age, and about the 48th of his ministry. His remains were interred in Friends' burying-ground at Lisburn, on the 18th day of the same month, having been accompanied to the grave by a large number of Friends and others, upon which occasion a meeting was held, wherein the solemnizing influence of the Power of Truth was felt to predominate.

Given forth in the Monthly Meeting of Lisburn, held there the 15th day of the Eleventh Month, 1827, and signed therein by a number of men and women Friends.

Read and approved in the Quarterly Meeting for the Province of Ulster, held at Lurgan, the 3rd of Twelfth Month, 1827, and signed in and on behalf thereof, by

THOMAS CHRISTY WAKEFIELD,

Clerk to the Men's Meeting.

Read and approved in our Women's Quarterly Meeting for the Province of Ulster, held at Lurgan same time, and in and on behalf thereof, signed by

MARGARET HARVEY,

Clerk to the Women's Meeting.

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